TASK FORCE
AND
PUBLIC DIALOGUE
ON THE
ROLE OF THE SCHOOL

INTERIM REPORT TO THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

Prepared by
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Role of the School Task Force
and
the Saskatchewan Instructional
Development & Research Unit (SIDRU)

June 30, 2000

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have been extremely helpful in supporting the work of this Task Force and Public Dialogue. Even though we are only at the interim stage of our work, it seems incumbent upon us, therefore, to express our thanks and acknowledge our debt of gratitude.

We have listed in Appendix 4 of this *Report* all the stakeholders, expert resource people, school divisions, and other agencies with whom we consulted between August 1999 and June 2000. The list of communities and participants is really quite extensive. We are most grateful for these contributions, and the efforts many individuals made to be present at these meetings. We are particularly grateful to the many school divisions listed and their staffs, who were so generous in their efforts to provide hospitality, offer commentary, and organize a variety of meetings with a wide range of participants.

Appendix 5 provides a list of submissions that were made to the Task Force; the range and extent of these submissions is also quite remarkable. We have benefitted immeasurably from these efforts, and wish to express our deepest gratitude to the individuals, groups and organizations, who took the trouble to prepare these written submissions and enlighten us with their insights.

The members of the Task Force also want to acknowledge the excellent work rendered by various support staff, and especially the expert help of the Saskatchewan Instructional Development and Research Unit (SIDRU) at the University of Regina, including: Dr. David Friesen, Director; Sandra Allan, Associate Director; Michelle Pawliuk, Project Assistant; Juanita Ingham, Research Secretary; Robin Endsin, and the other researchers. We note too the able assistance of Edie Hilts, Secretary, Dean's Office, University of Regina.

Without all of this cooperation, and the insights we have gained from the input of numerous people, this Report would be much less well informed than it is, and many issues would have been overlooked. Doubtless there are still gaps and flaws, but we offer this interim version precisely to give educational stakeholders, and the general public, a further opportunity to respond to our thoughts, analyses and recommendations, and thus to address any shortcomings that remain.

Once again, for all who have helped in so many ways - thank you!

Members of the Task Force

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Acknowledgements i

Task Force Members iv

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION 1

Invitation 2

Background 2

What We Did: The Dialogue Process 5
- Rationale 5
- Gathering Information 5
- Recording and Analyzing the Dialogue 6
- Recommending Action 7

SECTION 2: WHAT THE TASK FORCE HEARD: ANALYSIS AND THEMES 9

Community Consultations: Discussion of Themes from Focus Group Meetings 10

Role-Alike Summaries of Themes 21
- Administrators 21
- Business, Industry and Labour Groups 22
- Community Service Workers 23
- Parents 25
- Preservice Teachers 27
- School Board Members 28
- Students 29
- Teachers 31

May Hearings: Summaries of Presentations from School Divisions, Teacher Education Institutions, Other Agencies and Community Groups 33

Unique Responses from Rural and Northern Communities 47

SECTION 3: THE TASK FORCE RESPONSE: VISION AND RECOMMENDATIONS 53

Part 1: Response to the Terms of Reference 54

Part 2: Towards a New Vision for Schools and Human Services 57
Mission Impossible 58
Who Fails Children? 59
A Broader Vision for Community Schools 60
Early Intervention 62
High School Reform 63
Hidden Youth 66
The Interagency Imperative 68
Technology 73
Distance Education 75
Career Education 76
The Boundary Problem 77
The New School and Physical Plant 78
Character Education 79
Budget Implications 80
So What is the 'Role of the School'? 82

SUMMARY: RECOMMENDATIONS 83

APPENDICES 91

APPENDIX 1: List of Data-Collection and Information-Gathering Activities 92

APPENDIX 2: Table 1 Focus Groups 93

APPENDIX 3: Table 2 May Hearings 94

APPENDIX 4: List of Meetings Held 95

APPENDIX 5: List of Submissions Received 105

APPENDIX 6: List of Submissions for May Hearings 108

APPENDIX 7: Major Literature Review Topics 110
Foundational Documents Studied 110

APPENDIX 8: Terms of Reference 113

APPENDIX 9: Glossary 115

Task Force Members

John O. Anderson
John Anderson, B.A., U of S, and M.S.W., UBC, lives in Yorkton, where he is the South East Regional Director of Social Services. He has chaired the Regional Intersectoral Committee since its inception. John has worked in numerous positions in Saskatchewan in adult probation and child welfare, and has been Director of an adult correctional facility, a treatment centre for adolescents, and Director of Social Services Youth Services Division. He is married to Mary, and has three daughters.

Tina L. Anderson
Tina Anderson is a Métis person, co-manager of a family business in her hometown, the northern Métis community of Green Lake. She is Chair of the Northern Lights S.D. #113 Board of Education, and a member of the Boards of the Keewatin Yathé Health District, Northern Teacher Education Program (NORTEP), and Northwest Regional Victim Services. She has a B.A. in Psychology, and is working on a Bachelor's degree in Social Work. She enjoys many northern outdoor activities.

Ava Bear
Ava Bear is from the Muskoday First Nation, where she has been on the Band Council for 10 years. She also spent two years as the Tribal Vice-Chief for the Saskatoon Tribal Council. Ava has been a trustee with the Saskatchewan Rivers School Division in Prince Albert for the past two years; prior to that, she was a member of the Kinistino School Division Board. Ava is married to Dale; together they have two children and two grandchildren.

Carol Hayward
Carol Hayward is the Chair of the Pasquia Health District Board. She also volunteers in several other organizations in her community, and considers it a privilege to have the time and opportunity to do so. Carol helps her husband, Calvin, in the operation of their grain farm. She is mother to two adult children and grandmother to two "very special" grandchildren. She enjoys singing, especially in her church choir, as well as taking part in another of her favorite pastimes, old-time dancing.

Barbara Keirnes-Young
Barbara Keirnes-Young, B.A. (San Francisco College for Women), M.Ed., M.S., D.Ed. (University of Oregon), is currently President of LEADS (League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents) and Superintendent of Curriculum and Support Services for Regina Public Schools. Barbara was Director of Policy, Planning & Research for Saskatchewan Education during "Directions" and Core Curriculum policy development. She and Errol are parents to eight children and 12 grandchildren.

Murray J. Langgard
Murray Langgard is a retired Chief of Police of the Regina Police Service, Past President of the Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police, and past Board member of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. Murray is currently Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Anniversaries Secretariat. He has served on the Board of Directors of the Sherwood Cooperative Association, and is a member of the Regina 35 Lions Club. He is married with two grown daughters.

Task Force Members (cont.)

Michael (Mike) LeClaire
Mike LeClaire, B.Ed., P.G.D., M.Ed., has been an educator for 26 years. He has served children and youth in the capacities of teacher, counselor, vice and assistant principal, and currently, as Principal of Nutana Collegiate Institute in Saskatoon. Mike is married to Shirley, a social worker, and has three children, two in university and one in high school. He likes spending time with family at Delaronde Lake, and enjoys golf, fishing, hunting, skiing, camping, and canoeing.

Kate O'Brodovich
Kate O'Brodovich, B.V/T Ed., M.Ed., works as a career counselor for SIAST and as a distance tutor for Athabasca University. She has served on a local school board and a school council, and is now in her second term as Vice-President of the Saskatchewan Association of School Councils. Kate's interests include school reform and parent partnership in education. She lives with her husband and daughter near Shellbrook.

Ashley Topuschak
Ashley Topuschak, B.A. (Sociology), Uof S, is a native of Moose Jaw. Prior to her university studies, she became involved as a volunteer in community- based agencies, and continued that interest following graduation. Her experiences led her to her current position as Youth Coordinator for the Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board (SLFDB), a nonprofit organization working in partnership in training and labour force development issues.

Michael Tymchak, Chair
Michael Tymchak, B.A. (High Honours, History), Ph.D. (Philosophy), a native of Edam, completes his term as Dean of Education, U of R, on June 30, 2000. Before becoming Dean in 1992, Michael was Director of the Northern Teacher Education Program (NORTEP) in La Ronge. He has been involved in significant Saskatchewan educational endeavours, including the steering of major projects for the STF and the SSTA. Michael is married to Beryl; they live in Regina.

Debbie Ward
Debbie Ward, B.Ed., U of R, has been a Regina Catholic School System trustee since 1988. Currently past-president of the SSTA, Debbie has served on the SSTA executive since 1991. She has sat on several provincial committees, including the High School Review, the Curriculum and Instruction Advisory Committee, and the Equity in Education Task Force. She is married to Dave, and has three children.

Doug Willard
Doug Willard, B.Sc., has just completed his second and final term as STF president. Doug became a member of the CTF Board of Directors in 1998, and is currently a CTF vice-president. He has been on leave from Saskatchewan Valley School Division, where he taught senior math, physics, and chemistry at Rosthern High School. He has 28 years of teaching service and education involvement in Saskatchewan. He is married to Nadia, and has three children.

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

Invitation

As already noted in the Acknowledgements, the Task Force and Public Dialogue has benefitted from the cooperation, insights and input of many people. **Before writing the final report, however, we want to submit our preliminary findings and recommendations to the educational stakeholders and the general public of the province, to invite your reaction and response.** The issues covered in the *Interim Report* are numerous and complex, and often urgent. Having listened to you, and dialogued with you, we are anxious to bring the fruit of our deliberations and reflections back to you. Did we hear you correctly? Have we missed any important issues? What is your response to our efforts to address the problems and issues that have been identified? What do you think of the new directions that have been suggested, and the vision for reform that has been outlined in these pages?

In order to facilitate this second round of consultation, various meetings around the province have been planned. Obviously, the limitations of time and resources do not permit this second stage to be as extensive as the first. Nevertheless, we believe that it will provide significant opportunity for full and meaningful discussion, resulting in a stronger, more grounded and better nuanced final report. An invitational symposium has been scheduled for Fall/2000. **In addition, we invite written feedback via our mailing addresses or our fax number (all of which are listed on page 4).** In order for us to take best account of your comments, we would appreciate hearing from you by October 31, 2000.

Background

The Task Force on the Role of the School was created by the provincial Cabinet in May 1999. Its task is to conduct public dialogue and make recommendations concerning the role of the school in dealing with the impact of profound societal changes on the needs of children and youth today. The process began in September 1999 and culminates in December 2000 with a final report.

Societal Changes

The Task Force began by considering societal changes that are impacting families and communities today. Here are a few.

- *Technology* (e.g., television, computers) creates greater opportunities but more vulnerability to broader influences, earlier choices.
- *Socioeconomic pressures* (e.g., farm economy downturn; price instability in a resource-based economy; downsizing; provincial out-migration).
- *Globalization* develops external impacts on internal social, cultural, economic systems.

- *Knowledge explosion* results from research and rising levels of education.

- *Changes in family structures* cause greater mobility, less stability; movement from job to job, city to city; structure of two working parents; lack of adequate income and housing.

- *Increasing diversity* - a less homogeneous society in terms of values, belief systems; erosion of principles and practices of a "cooperative" way of life.

- *Urbanization* causes breakdown of rural social cohesion.

Resulting Issues

The next step was to identify the broad range of issues arising from these societal changes. They include the following:

- poverty and hunger
- demographic shifts
- diversity of student needs
- behavioral concerns and character development
- cultural integrity and preservation
- technological growth
- career-job development
- academic standards
- integration of service delivery.

The Questions

In terms of the Saskatchewan kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) student, the following questions needed answers:

- What are the changing needs of children, youth and communities?
- What is the role of the school in meeting these needs?
- What prevents these needs from being met?
- Specifically, how can people and organizations work together to meet these needs?

These questions have provided a foundation for Task Force consultations with individuals, school division role-alike groups, and local and provincial stakeholder organizations throughout the province over the past 10 months.

Gathering Information

This *Report* represents the first step in a process designed to:

- create a climate for change by setting the direction for concerted action among agencies and organizations concerned with the well being of the whole child; and
- give the government the public input it requires to address the issues of resources, support and structure necessitated by the changing role of the school.

Not included within the parameters of the Task Force dialogue are consideration of the value and benefit of Core Curriculum, the sharing of responsibility for education between the provincial government and local autonomous boards of education, and the constitutional protection afforded linguistic and minority faith populations.

Reporting

"What the Task Force Heard: Analysis and Themes" (Section 2 of this document) is a companion to the recommendations section entitled "The Task Force Response: Vision and Recommendations" (Section 3). Section 2 provides support for the recommendations by:

- summarizing the major broad themes revealed by the data collection and analysis process
- outlining the findings by role-alike group (e.g., central office and school administrators, teachers, students, trustees, parents, etc.)
- summarizing themes from the May hearings; and
- reporting unique responses from rural and Northern communities.

Readers who are puzzled by particular terms used in this *Report* may find help in the Glossary, Appendix 9.

This *Report* also provides the following detailed information in its appendices:

- a list of data-collection and information-gathering activities
- a list of all meetings held in the province from August 1999 to June 2000
- a list of all submissions received from August 1999 to June 2000
- an outline of a literature review; and
- a list of foundational references.

The Role of the School Task Force and Public Dialogue web site presents information on the Task Force and the conceptual basis for its existence. The major dialogue questions are listed there. Views and opinions are invited. The web site address is as follows:

www.roleoftheschool.com

The Task Force can also be contacted at the following mailing addresses or fax number:

Role of the School Task Force
c/o SIDRU
Faculty of Education
University of Regina
Regina, SK S4S 0A2
Fax: (306) 585-4880; E-mail: michael.tymchak@uregina.ca

What We Did: The Dialogue Process

Rationale

The Task Force constructed a process that would serve as a guide to the collection and interpretation of the data and to the reporting and dissemination of the study's findings. The process had the following specific purposes:

- ensuring a written record of the dialogue meetings for the identification of various points of view within role-alike groups for the Task Force committee members
- enabling committee members to use information from role-alike groups to progressively sharpen their questions for subsequent sessions
- providing the committee with data organized according to participant role-alike groups and emerging themes for committee deliberations concerning the reorganization of delivery services to children and youth within schools.

This project was granted ethics approval by the University of Regina Research Ethics Board in conformity with Tri-Council requirements. Confidentiality and anonymity of individuals and communities was assured for all focus group participants and interviewees.

Gathering Information

Members of the Task Force wanted to engage as many people in the province as possible in pubic dialogue about the changing role of the school. Given the expectation to produce an interim report by the end of June 2000, the challenge was to hear from a maximum number of groups in a maximum number of communities during the 1999 to 2000 school year. Therefore, the Task Force set up a schedule of 265 dialogue meetings in 26 urban and rural communities throughout the province.

Role-Alike Groups
- *administrators*
- *teachers*
- *students*
- *parents*
- *trustees*
- *community agencies*
- *business organizations*

Most of the Task Force members' time was devoted to the dialogue meetings. Groups were composed of the same kinds of people. There were administrator, teacher, parent, student, school division personnel, and trustee groups, as well as various community agencies and groups. This approach allowed Task Force members to become thoroughly familiar with the issues as perceived and articulated by the individual "role-alike" groups. A larger number of people were accommodated by splitting the Task Force into smaller groups (of three or four) meeting simultaneously. Special sites of interest and innovation, such as community schools, were also visited in various communities where hearings were held to expose the Task Force members to "best practices." Local school division officials organized the hearings, resulting in well-attended meetings.

School divisions and agencies not represented in the community hearings were invited to participate by sending in a brief or making a presentation to the Task Force. Lists of school divisions, agencies, and individuals that the Task Force heard from appear in the Appendices.

Submissions from the "public at large" were solicited through general advertisements. A web site was also established to accommodate those wanting to make individual submissions in that manner.

Up-to-date information on a number of relevant topics was made available to Task Force members over the course of the hearings. A number of experts were invited to present on selected, special topics. These presentations ranged from approaches to early childhood education, to innovative policing approaches, to the state of interagency delivery of services. A literature review was also conducted in a number of areas relevant to the role of the school and the summaries were provided to members.

In an effort to solicit input from students in school, an instructional unit entitled "Unit Study for Social Studies, History and Native Studies Courses Grades 9-12" was produced and will be distributed to all school divisions. It is anticipated that the unit will provide the Task Force with student perceptions and ideas to include in the final report to be submitted in December 2000.

The Questions

1. *What are the changing needs of children, youth and communities?*
2. *What is the role of the school in meeting these needs?*
3. *What prevents these needs from being met?*
4. *Specifically, how can people and organizations work together to meet these needs?*

Recording and Analyzing the Dialogue

The four major questions used by Task Force members were modified and sharpened as the process developed and members gained deeper insight into the issues.

Written records of comments, including direct quotations, were kept by a meeting recorder using a standard reporting form to ensure categorization of responses according to the four questions used.

An *analysis* of these written records (along with the web site and other submissions) was conducted to determine common themes and unique perspectives characteristic of role-alike groups. Analysis occurred as soon as the written reports from meetings were received from the meeting chairs.

A research associate was responsible for the on-going data analysis, under the supervision of the Executive Coordinator and Chair of the Task Force. A research assistant read the data independently of the research associate and reported regularly to the Executive Coordinator.

Analysis summaries were provided to committee members on a regular basis to deepen the dialogue in subsequent meetings and to serve as a guide to Task Force members in preparing recommendations.

The *interpretation* process took place through dialogue in Task Force committee meetings. Written records of these meetings were also kept.

See Appendix 1 for a list of information-gathering activities.

Recommending Action

Section 3 of this *Report* recommends specific action to be taken concerning the role of the school.

SECTION 2

WHAT THE TASK FORCE HEARD: ANALYSIS AND THEMES

Community Consultations: Discussion of Themes from Focus Group Meetings

From October 1999 to March 2000 inclusive, the Task Force conducted focus groups with a variety of role-alike and community groups in each of over 25 locations throughout the province (see Appendix 2 for numbers and Appendix 4 for locations). Besides hearing from the public in face-to-face discussions, we also received written submissions during this time. Following is a report of the major themes emerging from this community-consultation process, from an analysis by a Task Force research associate of meeting records and submissions. These themes inform the emerging vision of the Task Force (see Section 3).

Unchanging needs

Children and youth continue to have many of the same needs they have always had. However, the family is now less likely to attend to these needs.

> *It's interesting. We think of poverty only in terms of economics. But we can expand that to social, cultural and opportunities for nurturing.* (An Administrator)
>
> *Maybe it's not your job, but you can only watch a hungry kid for so long.* (A Teacher)

All groups explain that while many of the needs of children and youth have not changed, some parents are finding it difficult to meet the basic needs of their children. Teachers and administrators observe that students are coming to school hungry and/or malnourished, that many students lack adequate supervision when they are not at school, and that many students require more attention from a caring adult than they are getting. School board members, teachers, administrators and community service workers suggest that the disintegration of the family (divorce, single parenthood, lack of extended family), the economic necessity of two parents working outside the home, and a lack of parenting skills have all contributed to this situation.

Media influence

All groups suggest that, because of the pervasive influence of the media, many students need more adult supervision and guidance than they are currently receiving. Students suggest they need to be educated and supported in making the right choices regarding drugs (including alcohol) and sexual involvement.

They don't teach much sex education. My mom got pregnant when she was 15. They don't really explain the basics to you. They call it 'teen aid' and that's only dating and relationships. Before they had 'flour babies,' but that didn't really work. They knew that it wasn't a real responsibility. There needs to be more sex education at the junior high level, 'cause that's when you really get into dating and that. I don't tell my teachers this. But it's like if they said it, if they'd talk; I'd listen. (A Student)

All groups note that the media has had a profound affect on student behavior. Especially noted was the increasing incidence of violent behavior, including bullying. With the exception of students, groups suggest children and youth need to be somewhat sheltered from the effects of the media (especially television and the Internet). Students suggest they need to be taught how to evaluate what they hear and see and that teachers and parents need to become more aware, and more accepting, of what students are hearing and watching. Community workers agree that children and youth need to be better educated regarding the effects of drug use (alcohol is repeatedly mentioned) and sexual involvement at a younger age.

I have four or five friends who are alcoholics and there is no one out there to help them. (A Student)

Technological advances

Advances in technology have educational implications.

Technology has swept through society, while education has remained relatively unchanged. (A Preservice Teacher)

- Many suggest that, for students, a certain level of technological literacy is now almost a prerequisite for future success. Business, industry, and labour groups believe it is very important for students to have access to up-to-date technological learning tools and programs, especially in the area of computers. Students, administrators, and parents agree that access to up-to-date technology is important. However, they also stress that making certain all students are provided with adequate attention from a caring teacher must still be the schools' highest priority.

- Technological advances in medicine have impacted schools. More and more babies, born with disabilities, are surviving and thriving. With certain technological and teaching adaptations, many children and youth with special needs can now be placed in regular

Community Consultations: Discussion of Themes from Focus Group Meetings

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Theme One

Children and youth continue to need to be fed, loved and nurtured. They need attention, routine, and a safe, stable environment to live in. Today, they also need guidance in evaluating what they hear and see in the media, particularly regarding sexual involvement and the use of drugs, including alcohol. While it is not the sole responsibility of the school to meet all these needs, in many cases schools have taken on that role.

Unchanging needs

Children and youth continue to have many of the same needs they have always had. However, the family is now less likely to attend to these needs.

> *It's interesting. We think of poverty only in terms of economics. But we can expand that to social, cultural and opportunities for nurturing.* (An Administrator)

> *Maybe it's not your job, but you can only watch a hungry kid for so long.* (A Teacher)

All groups explain that while many of the needs of children and youth have not changed, some parents are finding it difficult to meet the basic needs of their children. Teachers and administrators observe that students are coming to school hungry and/or malnourished, that many students lack adequate supervision when they are not at school, and that many students require more attention from a caring adult than they are getting. School board members, teachers, administrators and community service workers suggest that the disintegration of the family (divorce, single parenthood, lack of extended family), the economic necessity of two parents working outside the home, and a lack of parenting skills have all contributed to this situation.

Media influence

All groups suggest that, because of the pervasive influence of the media, many students need more adult supervision and guidance than they are currently receiving. Students suggest they need to be educated and supported in making the right choices regarding drugs (including alcohol) and sexual involvement.

They don't teach much sex education. My mom got pregnant when she was 15. They don't really explain the basics to you. They call it 'teen aid' and that's only dating and relationships. Before they had 'flour babies,' but that didn't really work. They knew that it wasn't a real responsibility. There needs to be more sex education at the junior high level, 'cause that's when you really get into dating and that. I don't tell my teachers this. But it's like if they said it, if they'd talk; I'd listen. (A Student)

All groups note that the media has had a profound affect on student behavior. Especially noted was the increasing incidence of violent behavior, including bullying. With the exception of students, groups suggest children and youth need to be somewhat sheltered from the effects of the media (especially television and the Internet). Students suggest they need to be taught how to evaluate what they hear and see and that teachers and parents need to become more aware, and more accepting, of what students are hearing and watching. Community workers agree that children and youth need to be better educated regarding the effects of drug use (alcohol is repeatedly mentioned) and sexual involvement at a younger age.

I have four or five friends who are alcoholics and there is no one out there to help them. (A Student)

Theme Two

Societal changes have affected families, schools, and communities. These changes include technological advances, urbanization, changing work patterns, and changes to family structures. Families, schools, and communities are experiencing difficulty in making the necessary adjustments that these changes demand.

Technological advances

Advances in technology have educational implications.

Technology has swept through society, while education has remained relatively unchanged. (A Preservice Teacher)

- Many suggest that, for students, a certain level of technological literacy is now almost a prerequisite for future success. Business, industry, and labour groups believe it is very important for students to have access to up-to-date technological learning tools and programs, especially in the area of computers. Students, administrators, and parents agree that access to up-to-date technology is important. However, they also stress that making certain all students are provided with adequate attention from a caring teacher must still be the schools' highest priority.

- Technological advances in medicine have impacted schools. More and more babies, born with disabilities, are surviving and thriving. With certain technological and teaching adaptations, many children and youth with special needs can now be placed in regular

classrooms. While schools are now required to make the necessary adjustments to accommodate these children, some teachers explain that they lack the time and expertise to fulfill this obligation.

- Technological advances have contributed to an information explosion. Through the media (television and the Internet, in particular), young people are exposed to all sorts of information. While advances in information technology allow for exciting learning possibilities, these also mean that schools and families struggle with issues of equity (who has access to these tools?), use (what is the best way to use these tools?), and censorship (what should and shouldn't students be exposed to?).

Urbanization

In the last 50 years the population of Saskatchewan has changed from a largely rural to a largely urban one.

> *Small towns, you know most of your teachers all your life. You can tell your teachers everything. You have great relationships with your teachers. You can just call a teacher at home and talk to them. They'll take time out.* (A Student)

> *Small communities are a thing of the past. We have to move on to what works . . . we can't stay on the farm anymore.* (A Student)

- Administrators, parents, teachers, and school board members (trustees) note that the close-knit nature and community spirit, typical of rural communities of the past, are not as evident in many urban settings today. They explain that, when they were young, extended family members, neighbours, and other community members often knew them by name, offered them advice, and felt comfortable disciplining them. They believe that in today's urban settings such familiarity is quite uncommon.

  While some rural residents suggest rural communities still do offer children and youth such support and guidance, many rural administrators observe that rural school populations are not immune to urban problems. They explain that today some families move to rural Saskatchewan to take advantage of lower housing prices and the rural way of life. However, because the depressed rural economy offers few long-term employment opportunities, these families frequently move again to find more lucrative work. In such cases rural administrators find that students turn to the school as a source of stability.

- Rural students, administrators, parents, teachers and trustees also note that rural schools and communities are experiencing other problems. Because of the depressed farm economy and dwindling farm population, they are finding it increasingly difficult to offer students the learning and work-experience opportunities that are available in larger centers.

> *The crisis in agriculture is threatening our entire existence, our lifestyle.*
> (A Trustee)

Changing work patterns

In the majority of families today, two parents are employed outside the home.

- Because of work responsibilities, parents frequently have less time to spend with their children. It is also often difficult for parents to find high-quality childcare in the time before school, during lunch hour, and after school hours.

- There are no economic incentives for those who choose to stay at home with their children. Tax laws favour those who work outside the home and many families find it difficult to support their children on one salary.

- Teachers and administrators suggest teachers are the "significant adult" in many children's lives. This puts increasing stress on teachers who often have families of their own at home.

Changes to family structures

Because of divorce and/or choice, many families are now led by a single parent. Extended family members are less likely to live near each other or take part in the children's upbringing. Church attendance has also dropped markedly.

- Teachers and administrators note that during family breakups children often experience increased stress and that this stress is manifested in school in various ways. Parents suggest many children are not receiving the guidance and discipline they require and attribute this, somewhat, to the breakdown in family structures.

  We deal with kids who are orphans in their own homes. (An Administrator)

- Many single parents have limited supported networks. They are also often financially stressed and may have difficulty taking time off work when an emergency arises. Schools are often considered not only educational institutions but also childcare providers.

  Children are coming to school in various stages of readiness. If a parent is worrying about how to pay the rent and buy food, they are not going to be worrying about reading to the child. (An Administrator)

- Fewer families are attending church regularly. Many note that, because of this, the spiritual needs of children and youth are not being met and they are receiving less moral guidance, in general.

Theme Three

Student diversity has placed added pressures on schools and those who work within them. While society expects schools to educate and prepare all students to become contributing members of society, society does not appear to acknowledge (in light of student diversity and heightened workplace expectations) how difficult this is. Many teachers and administrators have become overtaxed as schools struggle, with little support, to meet the needs of all students.

Student diversity

> *The way schools are structured, to a large extent, presupposes that we have homogenous groups of children at each grade level who can move at a similar pace and that all can complete the work of a particular grade level at the same point in time (June 30th). Although everyone knows this is not true, our structures tend to force most schools to pretend that it is true.* (An Administrator)

- There is now greater academic, cultural, and economic and social diversity among students attending schools. Teaching methods and styles, as well as curricular design and enactment, are often not in keeping with student diversity and societal realities.

> *Everybody is expected to finish high school now. Thinking back 30 years, the drop-out rate was probably 50%. Now we're unhappy if the rate is 10%. The difference is that now kids who drop out can't become productive members of society.*
> (An Administrator)

- Groups explain that academic diversity within the general student population has increased for several reasons. Technological advances in health care have made it possible for many children, who otherwise would not have survived, to attend school. Students with disabilities are also no longer segregated from the general student population (e.g., School for the Deaf), but mainstreamed into general classrooms. In the past only academically inclined students were expected to complete high school. Now, all students are expected to matriculate.

- Yet curricula, as designed and enacted in classrooms, often do not address this diversity. Education related to life skills is often inadequate. Few options are available for those students who are not suited or do not wish to enter the academic stream. Those who are academically inclined frequently find school unchallenging because schools find it difficult to make the necessary accommodations needed for their particular learning needs.

- Cultural diversity has also increased. Globalization has increased the likelihood of students from other countries and cultures attending Saskatchewan schools. We are also now more aware of the importance of incorporating different cultural perspectives into school activities and of accommodating different cultural practices. Saskatchewan's population of students of Aboriginal descent is growing and schools endeavor to adapt practices to meet their needs. As cultural diversity increases, schools struggle with issues of racism. Students note that

Student diversity

> *The way schools are structured, to a large extent, presupposes that we have homogenous groups of children at each grade level who can move at a similar pace and that all can complete the work of a particular grade level at the same point in time (June 30th). Although everyone knows this is not true, our structures tend to force most schools to pretend that it is true.* (An Administrator)

- There is now greater academic, cultural, and economic and social diversity among students attending schools. Teaching methods and styles, as well as curricular design and enactment, are often not in keeping with student diversity and societal realities.

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some teachers demonstrate race-related bias, particularly against Aboriginal students, and that some students - of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal descent - display racist attitudes.

- There is now a greater gap between the rich and the poor. Two examples of this are as follows:
  - outside school hours, students from wealthier families often benefit from access to computers and other learning opportunities
  - students from less wealthy homes may miss out on extracurricular activities because families cannot afford the fees attached to such activities.

- There is greater social diversity within classrooms. Many students come to school lacking the "social skills" that would enable them to take advantage of the school learning environment. Teachers also note that in many families school is no longer valued. Students who come from homes where parents value school and take time to guide and work with their children tend to achieve at higher levels and take greater advantage of learning opportunities.

- Students note that teaching practices often fail to acknowledge different learning styles and that students are provided with few hands-on learning opportunities.

- Many note that life skills, career counseling, and career-education opportunities are necessary if students are to negotiate the transition to postsecondary education and the work world. At present these learning opportunities are not provided often or early enough.

> *The only jobs you know about are the main ones out there. We only learn about the basics. We need to have career ed. before going to high school.* (A Student)
>
> *I don't know if I could pick out our guidance counselor.* (A Student)

Teachers and administrators feel overburdened and underappreciated

Teachers and administrators are "burning out" quickly as they struggle to deal with student needs amid continued public criticism.

> *The media criticizes and invites people to second guess professionals all the time. Many parents don't have the confidence to come and inquire about these reports.*
> (An Administrator)
>
> *The teacher/pupil ratio is too high considering who we have in our classrooms (special needs students).* (A Teacher)
>
> *There seems to be a general unwillingness to work respectfully and cooperatively with administrators and teachers. I think this stems from a general distrust the public has with anything that is publicly administrated.* (An Administrator)

We are looking after others' children from 7:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. When do teachers, who are parents, find time to parent their own children? (An Administrator)

We are losing a very precious thing and that is that teachers are not being allowed to teach because they are dealing with social, health, and justice issues of children. (An Administrator)

Teachers and administrators observe that they, and many of their colleagues, are experiencing high levels of stress. They note that, while public expectations of educators have risen, public funding of education has been reduced. In a typical school day, teachers may be expected to act as a teacher, social, health, or justice worker. They also observe that in light of curricular change, including resource-based learning, teachers have not been given sufficient support in terms of time and resources. These circumstances have led to a high burnout rate among teachers and administrators.

Teachers are taxed to the limit. They shouldn't have to fix all of students' problems. (A Parent)

Societal nostalgia

Society, as a whole, and even teachers and administrators, tend to view schools nostalgically.

- Many taxpayers still consider teaching as a 9:00 to 5:00 job, with summers off. They have little understanding of the many challenges schools must deal with. They also expect school practices to be similar to what they experienced when they were going to school and are often uncomfortable with change.

- Some teachers and administrators also long for "the way it used to be." They feel overwhelmed by new curricula, are not comfortable with students who question their authority, and wonder if schools should be required to accommodate student diversity or if that is even possible.

There's a new reality and it's already happening around us and we in education have not responded. We are hanging onto our traditional beliefs and practices and we are reluctant to change. We're dragging a large boulder as we move forward in our change process. (An Administrator)

There is less fear of teachers. That's one way we might have progressed. I'm not sure that kids respect teachers less, but they fear them less than they did 20 years ago. Twenty years ago you could have gotten a crack upside the head for saying something wrong. (Administrators)

Schools as integrated service centers

> *Our schools are designed to meet the needs of kids in the 1950s and 1960s. We need to begin to look at what the needs of kids are now. We don't teach a program. We teach kids. We can be absolutely sure that our world is going to change more quickly than it has in the past.* (An Administrator)

In the vision of school as an integrated service center, social workers, health, justice, as well as other community workers, are housed in the 'school' and responsible for **providing for the 'other-than-schooling' needs of children, youth, and families. This model of schools as integrated service centers acknowledges the changing needs of children, youth, and communities.** Social workers, health, justice and other community workers are housed within the school. These workers, in cooperation with teachers, are able to provide for the various needs of students.

- Early childhood education becomes an acknowledged part of a student's school career with preschool education taking place at the school site.

- Parents and other community members are encouraged to become active members of the 'school,' contributing to the education of children and youth. Parents and others may also benefit from taking relevant classes offered by the center.

> *We can't isolate the needs of the kids from the needs of the parents.* (A Teacher)

> *Most parents care and want their kids to do well, but some may not know how to do it.* (A Community worker)

Education takes place both within and outside the school building

Education is no longer seen as only taking place within the four walls of the school.

- School is seen as only one site where education may take place. New learning opportunities may be revealed as community members become more involved in schools. As students become more involved in community-learning situations, they are afforded more opportunities to extend their learning in 'real-life' situations.

Theme Four

To meet the changing needs of children, youth, and communities, schools need to expand to become inclusive community centers where a full range of services is offered and where the presence and contributions of parents and other community members are welcomed. While the school building itself is seen as the 'hub,' it is understood that 'education' takes place both within the school and within the community.

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- Scheduling of classes can be adapted to meet the needs of student and staff. For example, many students engage in valuable extracurricular learning activities that are not recognized by schools. Students also note that much of the research shows there may be other educational benefits to adapting schedules. Scheduling classes later in the day may be particularly appropriate for students in their teenage years.

Theme Five
While problems still exist, many schools are already successfully adapting to societal changes. Schools will continue to improve if adequate funding is provided and if we work together, taking responsibility for our own role in educational change and demonstrating that we are willing to take action when necessary.

Community schools

Many suggest the community school model is a promising one. Community school workers describe its basic structure.

- The community school model is a flexible framework that acknowledges the uniqueness of each community, through a common basic philosophy, goals, and principles. The cultural and socioeconomic life experiences of the students and the community are taken into account in all planning.

- Education is seen as an opportunity that is offered to all members of the community. Students, parents and other community members are encouraged to participate in classes and assume leadership positions in the school and community. School staff members are also encouraged to take part in community ventures.

Alternate programs

Many promising programs and models already exist.

- The interagency model used by Nutana Collegiate Institute, Saskatoon
- The Compuer-Assisted Drafting (CAD) program at Winston Knoll Collegiate, Regina
- The School Resource Officer Program in Regina Schools
- The Balfour Wellness Center at Balfour Collegiate, Regina
- Community schools operating in Lethbridge, Alberta
- Yorkton Industry Safety training program.

Adequate funding

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All groups suggest that if society truly values education, then education must be adequately funded. Students today are suffering the consequences of the underfunding of schools. Groups describe the outcomes of funding decisions.

- Continued federal and provincial funding cuts have placed many school boards under constant financial strain. While groups suggested more funding is needed in many areas, they most frequently mention certain areas that are in need of immediate funding. These areas include funding to reduce teacher/pupil ratios, funding to allow for increased staff release time (necessary for collaboration and planning), funding so that more computer software and hardware can be purchased and/or updated, and funding so that older school facilities can be replaced or repaired.

- Short-term funding grants, provided for specific programs, are problematic. While schools boards find short-term funding allows them to offer programs that are beneficial to students, such programs also create expectations. When the short-term financial support is withdrawn, school boards are left in the unenviable position of explaining to parents and students that they will not be able to continue the programming.

Working together

All those involved in education need to find ways to work together for the benefit of children and youth.

- Many explain that change at the grassroots level needs to be encouraged and supported. We need to acknowledge that the process of integrating services will not proceed in the same manner everywhere in the province. What works in an urban setting may not work in a Northern or rural setting.

- An integrated-services approach should relieve some of the pressures on teachers who are now often taking on the role of parent, educator, health-care worker, social worker and even justice worker. Children and youth will benefit if other workers take on these roles and teachers are again allowed to be educators.

  > *We need a framework. If each person knew what their role and responsibility was, and if each person fulfilled his role and responsibility, you would not be asking these questions.* (An Administrator)

- Integrating services will require much collaborative effort. Workers will need to develop a certain level of understanding regarding each others' roles. Saskatchewan Education may need to put a structure in place that supports and encourages such a collaborative approach. It will also need to ensure that school boards are able to provide adequate release time for teachers if the process is to be successful.

- Many who work in the Aboriginal community note that children and youth of First Nations descent and their communities have unique needs that need to be acknowledged. Some

believe that the Aboriginal community needs to be allowed to make its own decisions regarding the education of students of Aboriginal descent.

> *We need our own criteria for the needs of the people in our communities.* (An Aboriginal community worker)

- Business groups and students believe that not only schools but also parents and the business community itself need to become more directly involved in providing students with appropriate educational opportunities. Business community members especially emphasize that more opportunities for the entrepreneurial learnings of the workplace are needed. They believe the business community could become more involved in schools by providing mentorship opportunities, cooperative work and study experiences, and school/business cooperative educational ventures.

> *Rather than have job fairs once a year, perhaps some partnerships can be forged that include job shadowing, or work placements, thus providing an opportunity for the youth to 'test drive' jobs.* (A Business community member)

> *Maybe parents and community members should be asked to help out. Maybe they don't know they are needed.* (A Student)

- Students believe they need to be more involved in educational decision making. They would like to be consulted regarding curricular choices, scheduling of classes, and governance of schools.

> *We're expected to be young adults, but we are not given enough freedom and responsibility.* (A Student)

Taking action

All groups suggest that we, as a society, need to reconsider our priorities. If we value children and youth, we must be willing to take the necessary action that will create opportunities for them to become contributing members of our society.

- All school workers must be willing to place the needs of children and youth above the individual mandates of the organizations they represent. Organizations must be willing to support workers as they try new approaches.

> *Each organization has its own mandate. It should be students first.* (An Administrator)

> *No one profession has the answer for everything.* (A Community worker)

- Saskatchewan Education needs to put structures in place that allow for increased information sharing and communication between departments and organizations.

Role-Alike Summaries of Themes

Administrators

The administrator category includes school division administrators (directors, superintendents, consultants) and school-based administrators (principals, vice-principals). Administrators all note several changes in our society that affect children, youth, and communities and therefore, indirectly, the role of the school.

- Children and young people still need to be fed, loved, and nurtured. They need attention, routine, and a safe, stable environment to live in. In many cases families are no longer attending to these needs. These changes in family structures have placed increasing stress on children and youth. Administrators explain that for many students attending schools today the 'significant adult' in their lives is now the teacher.

- Through the media, children and youth are now exposed to a variety of situations and circumstances. Children and youth now need more guidance in evaluating what they see and hear.

- Because of the academic requirements of the workplace, technological advances in health care, increasing disparity between the economic status of the rich and poor members of society, and increasing cultural diversity, student populations are now more varied. Schools struggle to make necessary adaptations.

- There are fewer workplace opportunities for students who are not academically inclined.

- Students are more questioning of authority and more knowledgeable. They want opportunities to apply what they have learned to real-life situations.

Administrators suggest schools need to be the center of an integrated-service model. They note that schools will have to invite other partners to join them, such as social services, health, and justice workers. Much consultation and sharing of information and ideas will be necessary to make this educational "full-service delivery model" work. Alternatives to traditional school frameworks may need to be considered. Working collaboratively with other partners (including students) to achieve goals is important. Schools also need to better prepare students for life outside school by placing more emphasis on career education and career counseling during school years.

Administrators note several barriers that prevent schools from meeting the needs of students and youth.

- Cuts in educational funding have had a great impact on schools. Facilities are outdated in many schools. Teacher/pupil ratios are too high. Schools are not provided with adequate funding but are expected to meet the other-than-schooling needs of students.

- There is a lack of cooperation between agencies (schools, Social Services, Health, and Justice) that work with students.

- The rights of the individual have superceded the rights of the group.

- Schools are not empowered by the government to provide the services students need.

- Rural schools have less funding available for, and less access to, technological supports. Course offerings are also limited because of low enrollments.

- The more schools do, the more they are expected to do. In many cases, this allows parents and the community to abdicate their responsibility for children and youth.

- It is becoming more difficult for Catholic and Fransaskois schools to maintain their distinctiveness.

- Positive change is hampered by our reluctance to let go of traditional practices and ways of thinking.

Administrators suggest that for positive change to take place in Saskatchewan schools:

- Alternatives in the areas of school buildings, scheduling, grading and teaching practices, and community involvement in schools will need to be considered.

- All partners - administrators, teachers, parents, health services, social services, judicial services, and community members - should be involved in education and learn how to work collaboratively.

- What is already working needs to be acknowledged and, in appropriate cases, copied.

- The government should consider:
  - the community schools structure as a model for all schools
  - amalgamating the two branches (K-12 and postsecondary) branches of education to help reduce duplication and increase communications
  - changing the tax system to encourage one parent to stay home with the children
  - reducing bureaucracy in all levels of government
  - providing early-intervention programs with stable funding.

Business, Industry and Labour Groups

Business, industry and labour group responses again highlight the importance of preparing students for their eventual role in the workforce. They note that students need to be prepared for work in an increasingly competitive global market where technological advances are rapidly occurring. Students need tools that will help them negotiate the many career changes they are likely to encounter in their work lives. It is the school's role to provide the basic tools and

attitudes students will need for future success - *skills* being the ability to communicate effectively (reading and writing skills are accented) and *attitudes* which include enterprise, enthusiasm, and self-motivation.

Business, industry and labour groups suggest that, not only schools, but parents and the business community itself, need to become more directly involved in providing students with appropriate educational opportunities. They suggest such involvement may include mentorship opportunities, cooperative work and study experiences, and school/business cooperative educational ventures.

Several barriers that interfere with schools successfully fulfilling their role are also noted:

- Career development is viewed as an event rather than a process.
- Career development resources are lacking.
- Educational bureaucracies are unwieldy and prevent necessary program changes.
- Students do not have the benefit of learning to use up-to-date technology.

Business, industry and labour groups believe some of these barriers can be addressed by involving some of their members more directly in career education. In this regard, they particularly highlight the efforts of COMMUNITY netWORKS. They also suggest Saskatchewan Education could better support career education by providing adequate funding and allowing work experience and apprenticeship programs to count as credits for Grade 12 matriculation.

Community Service Workers

Workers in community service agencies suggest that today's families are more needy, attributing this neediness to:

- *Changing work situations*. Because of the nature of the workplace, many parents work shifts or hold down several part-time jobs, frequently moving in search of work. Often, work environments are not "family friendly" (parents are not allowed time off to tend to children's needs) and high-quality day care is difficult to find.
- *Financial limitations*. Many families live on a restricted income and find it difficult to provide their children with the basic needs of food and clothing. School fees associated with curricular and extracurricular activities can overwhelm budgets already stretched to the breaking point.
- *Single parenting*. The number of single parents has increased. Single parents often have to deal with the competing demands of work and family and often with little support.

- *Changing communities*. Communities are less supportive of children and youth. Parents often lack effective parenting skills and there are few community members they can turn to for support. In many cases technological devices (such as computers and television) have taken the place of caregivers. Community workers note that some children have delays in speech and language because of lack of interaction with caregivers.

Community workers observe that bullying behavior, early sexual involvement (often resulting in teenage pregnancy), and teenage smoking rates among children and youth have all increased. Many students live on a diet made up largely of fast food and junk food. Community workers explain that all these student behaviors may be, in part, what they have observed via the media, at sporting events, as well as in their homes and communities. Also, community workers believe that many children and youth feel alienated from the communities in which they live, explaining that it is often difficult for young people to become involved in communities in meaningful ways. Within schools, racism and lack of acknowledgement of diversity also prevent many students from reaching their full potential.

Community workers suggest that schools need to become community centers that focus on meeting the physical, social, psychological, and educational needs of students. Such centers would provide space for social, health and justice workers, as well as teachers and other support staff. They would be "family friendly" (open for extended hours, offer daycare services, parenting classes, as well as other community services). Preschools would also be included in these centers.

Other educational needs of students could be addressed by providing more programming alternatives, including more hands-on practical courses, more alternatives for students who cannot function within the regular classroom environment, and more alternatives for those who are less academically inclined. Racism would partially be addressed through curriculum that focuses on the history and culture of First Nations peoples and through finding ways to ensure that an Aboriginal voice is included in school administrative decisions. Teacher/pupil ratios would be lowered (12 students to 1 teacher is suggested), and technological literacy, positive discipline, and expression through the arts would be emphasized.

At present several factors prevent schools from providing for the needs of children and youth. There is a lack of:

- coordination among agencies (caused by a lack of cooperation, jurisdictional issues, and lack of common language and evaluation practices)
- Aboriginal representation
- computer access
- knowledge among educational staff
- personnel and practical resources
- vision regarding the place of the school in the larger world.

Community workers note that schools are not a societal priority to many government officials who make funding decisions. Parents and community members, seemingly perceiving education

of the young as the school's sole responsibility, also frequently fail to take ownership for school issues.

Community workers suggest the following ways that people and organizations can work together to meet the needs of children, youth, and communities.

- Invite parents and community members to become more involved in schools, including decision making within the school.
- Employ intermediary personnel to act as go-betweens, connecting the community and the school.
- Legislate changes to the mandate of support agencies, enabling them to more readily meet the needs of children and youth.
- Adopt an "integrated case-management" approach and train teachers and principals in this approach.
- Create representative school boards by including the voices of Aboriginal people and students.

Parents

Parents believe there are more "needy children" in classrooms, suggesting the reasons for this neediness are varied.

- Since the advent of mainstreaming, the number of children and youth with exceptionalities who participate in regular classrooms has greatly increased.
- More students are coming to school with "social baggage" because of an increase in poverty rates and dysfunctional family situations.
- Because of a general breakdown in societal and family structures, many children and youth do not receive adult guidance outside school hours.
- Social Service workers have "invaded" parenting, informing children and youth of their rights and thus undermining parental authority.
- Children and youth are exposed to a great deal of information through the media. Even though many students are too young and inexperienced to make wise choices regarding such information, adults find it difficult to protect young people from such media influence.
- Technological literacy has now become a need, yet many students do not have access to computers through the school or at home.

Parents note several factors that prevent the needs of children and youth from being met.

- The special needs of students are frequently not identified and addressed. Parents note that this is especially true for students who have behavioral problems and particular gifts and talents.

- Teacher/pupil ratios are too high (especially in the light of student diversity).

- Parents are expected to fund-raise because of lack of funding for schools. The purpose of fund-raising projects ranges from building recreational facilities for students, to purchasing resources, and providing for the nutritional requirements of students. The success of such fund-raising depends on the commitment of parents. Thus, educational opportunities for many students are unequal.

- Teachers have difficulty fulfilling their role as academic instructors because, in many circumstances, classroom situations force them to take on the role of social worker, health-care worker, and psychologist.

- Schools offer no good "second option, such as work programs" for those students who do not wish to continue their formal education. Even when such programs are available, they are not widely publicized.

- The unique characteristics of rural and Northern communities are not reflected in schools.

- The confidentiality rules that guide the Young Offenders Act prevent teachers from being informed of possible problems they may encounter with certain students.

Parents believe they should not be asked to continue to act as fund-raisers and that teachers should not be asked to take responsibility for the other-than-schooling needs of students. Parents think it is the role of the school to:

- Provide support for students and families at the preschool level, including skill building for young children and parenting classes for families.

- Identify the social, behavioral, and health needs of students and find the support they need by working with other agencies. It is the role of the school to explore all support options.

- Provide more extracurricular opportunities for youth (especially high school students).

- Provide children and youth with more career education opportunities.

- Provide alternatives to academic programming.

- Emphasize positive teacher/student relationships.

Parents suggest schools could be improved by:

- providing teachers with adequate training in the area of special needs
- hiring more teacher librarians to support resource-based learning
- adopting the community school model for all schools
- providing adequate government funding for programming
- adopting an "open-door" policy in all schools so that parents and community members become more involved in children's education
- ensuring that the proper personnel are available in schools to provide for the other than schooling needs of students
- encouraging policy makers to take the unique characteristics of rural and Northern Saskatchewan into consideration when making educational decisions.

Preservice Teachers

Members of a university Education class of preservice teachers ("student teachers") were asked by their professor to consider the four questions of the Task Force and fill out meeting report forms. This was a voluntary activity and not a formal part of the community-consultation process; however, the reports were analyzed and the results are included here for their interesting insights.

Preservice teachers suggest the needs of children and youth are different today than they once were. They explain that, because of changes to society's social structures, many children and youth no longer receive the support they need from home and, instead, turn to the school for the guidance and care they need. Also, rapid advances in technology have made it necessary for today's students to maintain a high level of technological literacy. In addition, students and teachers need to be protected from the increasing levels of violence exhibited in today's schools.

Preservice teachers believe parents and other community members need to become more involved in the education of children and youth. Teachers and workers in other agencies such as Social Services, Health, and Justice need to work together in schools so that children and young people are provided with the support and education they need. Schools need to teach teachers and students how to manage conflict and also encourage parents to take more responsibility for their children's education.

Student teachers note barriers that prevent schools from meeting the needs of students.

- Government funding of education is inadequate, leading to high teacher/pupil ratios, run-down school facilities, and lack of resources.

- Teachers are not trained to deal with situations related to professional conduct.

- The role of the parent is undervalued in today's society.

- Society, in general, views the role of the teacher with a nostalgia that is not in keeping with the realities of today's classroom.

Student teachers think schools could be improved by encouraging parents to become more involved in their children's education and by establishing better communication among agencies that provide support to students and schools (e.g., Health, Justice, and Social Services). Students also need to be educated with to respect diversity, as well as provided with models of such respect. Examples include ensuring that minorities are equally represented in all areas of teaching and administration. Finally, curriculum needs to more closely match the needs of students. For example, more emphasis needs to be placed on career education and guidance, and alternate programming must be made available for students who have unique needs.

School Board Members

School board members (trustees) believe that poverty, changes to family structure (two working parents, lack of extended family), society's tendency to undervalue children and youth, and many parents' lack of parenting skills, have contributed to the increased neediness of children and youth. They suggest that the profile of students attending schools has changed over the last 20 years. They note that a substantial number of children and youth today come to school hungry, suffer from the effects of abuse and neglect, and lack the social skills necessary to succeed in school. In addition, many students with special needs are now mainstreamed into the general student population. Schools now find it necessary to provide breakfast and lunch for hungry children, deal creatively with student behavioral and emotional problems, and find ways to support special needs students. According to trustees, all this must be accomplished in an atmosphere characterized by funding cuts and a chronic lack of educational resources.

School board members think it is the role of the school to provide children and youth with the preparation required to become contributing citizens of society. They note that enacted curriculum may need to be adapted to achieve this goal. They suggest:

- More courses in applied and practical arts should be offered.
- More work-experience opportunities should be provided to all students.
- Career education should begin at Grade 6.
- Computers should be used to individualize courses.
- Physical education should be scheduled at least three times a week.
- Educational policies need to be flexible enough to allow for local differences (rural and Northern Trustees, especially, highlight this point).

Trustees also think it is important to acknowledge several roles that are not the responsibility of the school.

- School staff members are not parents. Parents still need to assume primary responsibility for their children.

- Schools should not be required to accommodate the needs of "high" special needs students.

- Teachers' primary responsibilities are to attend to the educational needs of students. Social workers, Health, and Justice workers should be employed to attend to other-than-schooling needs.

School board members note several barriers that, at present, prevent schools from meeting the needs of students:

- Federal and provincial grant structures are cumbersome, difficult to access, and often inadequate.

- Teachers are not trained to deal with the needs of exceptional students.

- The public is unaware of classroom realities and, therefore, not supportive of schools.

- The structures that support the involvement of the Departments of Health, Social Services, and Justice in schools are inadequate. The result has been fragmented service delivery that prevents a child-centered approach.

- Teacher/pupil ratios are too high and do not reflect the diverse needs of students.

- Federal and provincial governments have not demonstrated, through funding priorities, that they value children and the education of children.

- Many parents lack basic parenting skills, including how to discipline their children and how to ensure their children's nutritional needs are met.

- Children and youth lack spiritual and moral direction. (Northern Trustees, especially, explain that the loss of traditional culture in the North has left children and youth with few common moral values to live by.)

Trustees think schools may need to undergo some basic structural changes to better meet the needs of children, youth, and communities. They suggest schools may need to become community learning centers that are open for extended hours. Such facilities may include day-care centers, exercise rooms, and space for personnel from other support agencies. For these changes to take place, trustees believe schools need to be given the mandate to help students in need, and proper funding must be available at the local and school level.

Students

When asked about their changing needs, students spoke of the many stresses on children and youth today:

- the parental, teacher, and societal expectation that students consistently act as "model citizens"
- societal pressure to be the best, achieve a certain look, and maintain a certain lifestyle
- pressures because of the increasingly violent nature of society
- familial pressures caused by dysfunction within the family, parental separations, and divorce
- academic/economic pressures caused by workplace requirements that include a university education.

Students explain that these pressures, as well as other factors, have contributed to changing needs. They suggest they need:

- more emotional and social support than they are currently receiving
- because of greater cultural diversity and recognition of the diverse ability levels and learning styles among students:
  - teachers need to use a variety of instructional strategies
  - students and teachers need to be exposed to a variety of cultures
  - support personnel (such as health, social, and justice workers) need to be located in the school for easy access.

Students suggest it is the school's role to provide:

- a safe and caring environment
- social, expressive, technological, and practical skills
- for the social, emotional needs of students
- for the practical needs of students (such practicalities may include daycares in schools and course offerings such as how to parent).

Students note several factors that prevent the school from fulfilling its role.

- Some teachers and students have negative and racist attitudes.
- Schools are not designed to fit the needs of students.
- Career education and career counseling are inadequate.
- There are not enough opportunities for students to connect with fellow students and teachers.
- Postsecondary education is unattainable for some students because of location and financial restrictions.

Students think their learning environment could be improved by:

- schools becoming more aware of, and directing more funding towards, the social needs of students
- increasing extracurricular learning opportunities for students
- beginning career education earlier and ensuring career counseling is readily available to all students

- providing more opportunities for students to express their views (student forums are mentioned in particular)
- offering a greater variety of curricular options through the establishment of on-line courses and video conference hook-ups
- gearing instruction to learning styles
- creating a student Help phone line for counseling and information
- increasing the number of courses that focus on practical life skills.

Teachers

Teachers observe that many of the children and youth they teach suffer from physical and emotional problems. These students are often malnourished, frequently sick, and ill prepared, socially, for school. Teachers note that while many students are well aware of their rights, they lack an understanding of their social responsibilities to others and frequently display a lack of respect for teachers and other adults in their communities. Many students also lack motivation and a future orientation. Teachers wonder if this lack of motivation and future orientation may be the result of the complex and unpredictable nature of many students' lives. Teachers explain that they are frequently the only reliable adults in the lives of some students.

Teachers believe that dysfunctional families, poverty, the lack of support from extended family members, parents who lack parenting skills, and a society that fails to take responsibility for caring for, disciplining, and guiding youth have contributed to the problems children and youth are experiencing. This situation has been exacerbated in rural communities because of the crisis in farming and in Northern communities because of high unemployment.

While teachers emphasize that schools cannot be expected to "fix everything," they do have some suggestions regarding the role of the school. Teachers believe that, in light of the changing profile of some of the students they teach, schools need to adapt to meet the needs of the children and youth. They offer some suggestions in this regard.

- Locate support services - such as health, social services, and justice - right in the schools.

- Encourage the community to become more involved in providing for the nonacademic needs of students.

- Make crisis and career counseling readily available in schools.

- Adapt academic and other school programs to fit the needs of the student population. This may mean increasing technical and trade programs and practicing some form of "academic streaming."

- Make work experience available to all students and ensure that students have the opportunity to be exposed to workplace technology.

- Emphasize the importance of becoming "good citizens" by accenting the importance of respect and integrity in all school programming.

Teachers note that, at present, there are several obstacles that prevent them from meeting the needs of the students they teach.

Time

- They lack time during the day to give students the attention they need. This is especially true in classrooms where there are many students with special needs.
- Much classroom time is spent on meeting the basic needs of students (making sure they are fed and nurtured) and, thus, teachers have less time to spend on the more academic aspects of schooling.
- The red tape (reporting and documenting) that bureaucracies demand means that teachers have less time to spend on teaching and preparation.
- New curricula, resource-based learning, and changing instructional strategies mean that more time is required for preparation and consultation with other teachers.

Lack of support for children and youth

- The role of parents and families in the socialization of children is undervalued. Family allowance and tax incentives encourage both parents to work outside the home, leaving many children and youth unsupervised before and after school.
- Families often do not take responsibility for disciplining their own children; yet, teachers are not given the authority to discipline students appropriately.
- Families move frequently, disrupting students' school lives.
- Parents are more demanding and questioning but less supportive of teachers and schools.

Curriculum

- Curriculum initiatives are not sufficiently funded (e.g., lack of funding for facilities, resources, and professional development).
- Much of the curriculum is designed for students who plan to attend university.
- Teachers are not adequately trained in many curricular areas (special needs is an area cited frequently).

May Hearings: Summaries of Presentations from School Divisions, Teacher Education Institutions, Other Agencies and Community Groups

1. What are the changing needs of children, youth, and communities?

In response to the question "What are the changing needs of children youth and communities?" three themes emerged. The first theme pertains to children's basic needs, both home based and school related; the second, to youth needs; and the third, to community.

Those who submitted positions to the Task Force indicated that children's needs have not changed over the years. However, what has changed is that there are more children with needs that are only partially met. According to school districts, basic needs have to be addressed before learning can occur. By *basic*, they mean a safe environment, adequate nutrition, emotional and parental support, and access to proper health care. In addition, children require structure and routine, opportunities to develop and refine social skills, exposure to positive role models, intellectual stimulation, mental health care, dental services, safe adult supervision, and opportunities to learn about themselves, their language, their identity, and their culture. Children need to feel they belong and they need to have a sense of hope and confidence about the future.

Home-based dimension

School divisions also expressed concern about the lack of adult and family support for children. Not all children come from stable, supportive home environments. Family structures and dynamics have changed and the "traditional" stay-at-home parent has been superseded by single-parent families, blended families, and dual-income families. Because of economic pressures, many more families are transient. This may disrupt children's routines and structures and deprive children, as well as parents, of the support of a nearby extended family.

School districts point out that children are often beginning kindergarten without basic preschool skills. The "busyness" of parents' lives means that the supervision of children has sometimes defaulted to television and video games. This lack of adult supervision often results in an increased transiency, related to both residence and school, and in peer influence that is not always controlled by a parent. As one school division pointed out:

> *The level of attention children get from their families has decreased in many cases. Consequently, there is a need to be met in terms of local support and social skills training.*

Many respondents note that parental involvement in schools has declined, reflecting changing attitudes. Parental expectations of "you look after it" place additional stresses on the school. As well, some families do not support the school in its mission . . . their child's work is undone, the child may be unsuccessful in class and these difficulties are hurled back at the school as not doing its job. Some families also exhibit a lack of respect for authority and this attitude is passed onto the children.

Lack of cooperation and reduced parental support ultimately minimizes a school's ability to act on behalf of the child. For the school to function effectively, there needs to be open communication between the parents and the school.

School-based dimension

The school is more than just a place where children come to learn. Certainly, the school is a social institution with the greatest capacity to create hope and support for children and youth. Contemporary society is increasingly pluralistic and multicultural. It is no longer accurate to say that family, church, community, and volunteer organizations are in a position to offer support to children. In attempting to respond to the diverse needs of students, schools have been forced to expand their role into child rearing. Consequently, institutions have to deal with a myriad of new issues (e.g., community services, healthy lifestyle education, nutrition, exercise, and sex education). There are simply more students with more needs.

> *There are more special needs students with emotional and behavioral problems. Excess pressure is placed on teachers to cope with such a wide variety of children in the classroom. Therefore, teachers must modify programs for the varying grade levels, plus deal with the behavioral and emotional problems the kids are bringing to school. As a result, teachers have become social workers, counselors, parents, and child psychologists.*

More children are arriving at school with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), fetal alcohol effects, learning disabilities, and severe behaviors. As one school division expressed it:

> *Special needs children require a considerable amount of support through designated personnel, special facilities and, in some cases, programming considerations and other support. While we believe these children should be with their peers, additional funding is needed to support these high-cost students.*

Many respondents indicated there was an expectation from the community that all children's needs would be met by the school, no matter how numerous or diverse. It was a community view that schools should be responsible for the development of the whole child, including social-skills training.

Many respondents expressed concern about the challenges associated with providing an adequate education, one that would prepare students for the workforce. Students need mentorship and apprenticeship programs, as well as access and guidance from skilled people in the community that might help them focus on career goals. In rural communities there are fewer work-experience choices for youth. Rural school districts expressed concern that students in smaller communities do not have the same choices and opportunities of those students living in larger communities. Rural school closures have resulted in children being sent to already overcrowded centres.

Many school divisions expressed concern that students need to access technology to compete in an ever-increasing electronic world. Staying current with information technology and providing students with trained teachers and resources causes financial strain for many boards. The decline in rural enrollments can make it difficult to provide full-service education. As well, some youth are engaged in high-risk behavior, linked to negative peer pressure, drugs, alcohol, bullying, and violence. To help develop positive self-image and improved self-esteem, adolescents need positive involvement in sports, access to cultural-based activities, and involvement in community-based programs.

Communities need many types of supports and services to ensure that children are better prepared for school. Many respondents expressed concerns over the increasing distances between services and the aging or nonexistent facilities which provide sports and recreation for children, youths, and families. In Northern communities, job-creation programs are needed to stimulate economic development:

> *Communities in rural Saskatchewan are faced with continued depopulation, increasing distances between services, and aging facilities. People in rural areas are faced with a depressed agricultural economy, the effects of which are felt by all.*

2. What is the role of the school in meeting these needs?

In response to the question, "What is the role of the school in meeting these needs?" four themes emerged: meeting the (a) needs for services, (b) learning needs, (c) needs of parents, and (d) needs of youth.

An overwhelming majority of the respondents said it is the school's role to look after the educational needs of students.

> *A solid academic education is more important to the future of students than ever before and we need to do everything to ensure it happens.*

However, to fulfill this role, school districts acknowledge they must first address the mental and physical health of students. If schools are to provide for students' needs, effective support programs, centered in the school, need to be funded.

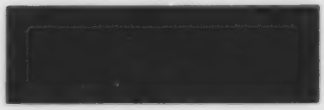
> *Students do not come as blank slates. They come to us with their emotional experiences, social experiences, and physical qualities, together with the spiritual and educational experience. A holistic approach is needed.*

Respondents' comments suggest there is a need for partnerships among students, parents, teachers, school systems, and communities. The school, they say, should be the heart of the community and should function to disseminate information and services to parents and to the community at large. As secure facilities, schools could be opened to more community use, acting as a "space" for community groups to offer their services.

Some respondents felt there was a limit to what the school should attempt to do in addressing children's needs. Many of the groups that made submissions suggested schools should be more open to interagency cooperation.

> *Development needs to take place in the community, the school is a good starting place, but they cannot continue to absorb all the ills of the community, even those that impact the students that attend that school.*

Schools, they say, should identify children's needs, in order to direct them to the proper social agencies (e.g., Social Services, addictions counseling, RCMP, Justice). To ensure that children's needs are met, on-going staff training is required. Teachers, administrators, and consultants need to know about and practice integrated case management.



Many respondents indicated that preschool education should be integrated with the school system and that schools should promote early intervention for children at risk. Early identification of special needs in kindergarten would facilitate additional services for

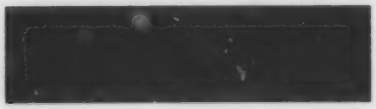
children (e.g., speech, language, reading, math, and behaviors). Several respondents suggested that, in addition to teaching academic subjects to children, social skills should also be taught. Not only do schools need to foster within students the desire to learn independently, to make choices, and to problem solve, but it also needs to teach children self-awareness and acceptance of others.

A number of respondents indicated that schools ought to sensitize students to a more ethically healthy lifestyle and role model proper values, morals, social behaviors, responsibility, and respect. Most specified that schools should uphold the standards of society, academic excellence, and life-long learning as an important goal. In addition, the school must be responsive to the needs of its multicultural, Aboriginal, and Francophone communities by developing and building culturally affirming programs.

To adequately meet the needs of students, the majority of respondents recommended smaller class sizes and increased support for classroom teachers. The increased demands for services in schools requires that other professionals be available.

> *In any given day, a teacher is a mentor, guide, parent, friend, surrogate parent, counselor, as well as being expected to deliver a curriculum of studies.*

This may necessitate hiring more staff (e.g., special education teachers to provide direct services to children; the addition of more nonteaching staff, such as teacher assistants; and a school counselor for guidance in nonacademic issues). Increased personnel and decreased class size would result in more personal attention for all children.



Parents and school staff need to be supportive of each other. Opening the school to larger community use might facilitate more parental support. For example, schools might assist parents by offering positive parenting courses, literacy courses, as well as training and upgrading on a variety of workplace skills.

> *Parents need training and upgrading. Schools can provide some assistance in this area so parents have the skills to care for their children, promoting shared responsibilities with families.*

School districts recognize the importance of involving parents in schools. Parents and students should be encouraged to participate in a school's goal setting, action planning, and problem-solving processes. Parents also need information and skills to be effective education partners in both the school and the home. To the same extent, opportunities are needed for parents and teachers to meet in order to socialize and learn together. Schools also need to encourage and support the involvement of community Elders. In addition,

communities could provide supervised after-school and extracurricular programs, run by outside organizations using the school's facilities. Increasing community use of schools might be a good way to support and maintain small schools.

School districts expressed a great deal of concern regarding students' knowledge and skill pertaining to information technology.

> *Influence of TV and the Internet significantly improved some children's maturity and worldliness. They have more global outlooks.*

Access to and the effective use of computers in the classroom requires additional staff, resources, and technology. Province-wide access to the universal, high-speed Internet must be in place to have some degree of equity between rural and urban schools. Student access to computers, however, is not enough. To maximize computers in the classroom, teachers need support integrating it into their teaching.

For those students not bound for postsecondary institutions, schools are also expected to facilitate transitions to the workplace. Better prepared students, the thinking goes, are able to make more informed career decisions:

> *Programs designed to meet students' needs are critical (e.g., work experience, partnerships, Science Fair, Computer-Assisted Drafting, advanced placement).*

Schools are mirror reflections of society as a whole. To ensure all students' needs are met, respondents indicated that schools should examine and consider different education systems, flexible scheduling, distance education, and alternative choices for those students unable to function within the existing system (e.g., those with regular behavior issues). One respondent noted:

> *While the school can make its contribution to these systemic needs of our society, they cannot be expected to meet them alone. These are societal issues and all of society and its institutions must address them.*

3. What prevents these needs from being met?

In response to the question "What prevents these needs from being met?" four main themes emerged: (a) funding, (b) fragmented services and the breakdown of support, (c) societal pressures, and (d) school staffing needs.

[redacted]

Most respondents indicated that insufficient government funding for education is the main reason that child, youth, and community needs are not being met. The priority and allocation of spending for education is a concern, because any increase in the level of service requires increased funding. Additional demands placed on schools to deliver increasingly diverse services to students and families, along with continuous revisions of curriculum to meet the expectations of society and the business sector, have resulted in an overburdened education system.

> *The number one reason that prevents these needs from being met is the lack of funding for education. We are continuing to be faced with how to do more with less. The level of funding has not kept pace with the level of expectation.*

Respondents note that schools are responsible for meeting every student's need, even though they might not have the commensurate resources. Some respondents advocate dropping much of the social-intervention work that schools have assumed by default. It should be passed on, they say, to integrated Social Services.

> *Perhaps a clearer definition of roles and responsibilities of the service providers would be helpful. At present, we believe schools and school resources are being used in areas where service and funding should be provided by district Health Boards or the Department of Social Services.*

[redacted]

Many school divisions expressed the opinion that there needs to be a unified and focused interagency vision or plan to address the issue of supporting children.

> *The fact that various government departments have specific areas of responsibility, and supposedly are held accountable for those specific areas, results in fragmented services to children and their families.*

Often schools and teachers require fast, direct access to resource personnel in the school or school division. Many school districts indicate that the extent to which they are successful is dependent on other social services.

Most service organizations possess inadequate financial resources, as well as heavy caseloads among staff. It is difficult for outside agencies to give ready, timely assistance for students with special needs. Respondents suggest that the presence of other agencies in the

school would promote a sense of working towards a common goal and facilitate cooperation and communication between school groups and agencies. In some areas, the availability of services to families may be restricted for a variety of reasons (e.g., distance, difficulties following through on treatment, or subsequent appointments); an on-school site for integrated services may address some of these inequities.

> *Consequently, the provision of adequate human-resources personnel for school divisions is a must. This includes the presence of such personnel as guidance counselors, school social workers, and educational psychologists. Shared-service funding provided an admirable start as far as school divisions receiving these services. However, school divisions' needs have gone far beyond what shared services is able to provide.*

Respondents note a breakdown of community support for children at risk. Sometimes there is poor coordination between agencies; at other times agencies' goals may be so restrictive that the needs of children are missed. Issues pertaining to poverty, stress, and distance need to be addressed. One respondent drew attention to the needs of disenfranchised youth, pointing out that many of them are not receiving education or other services because they are not attending school and are often not living at home.

> *Education has no mechanism for rescuing these young people even though they are of compulsory school age.*

Various respondents were concerned about the increasing number of children attending centralized schools outside their home community. As well, students and parents have busy schedules outside school, making it difficult for either to be actively involved in the school. As one division pointed out:

> *A child's need for belonging is undermined by a number of contributing factors: dual-parent workforce, single parents, economic difficulties, increasing mobility of families, larger centralized schools outside of the community, and high pupil-teacher ratio.*

There are many stresses on families (e.g., isolation and distance from major centres, financial difficulties, increased travel, single-parent or dual-income families, and weak parenting skills) that can result in a decrease of emotional and psychological support that children need if they are to develop normally.

In addition to these stresses, many respondents highlighted the major impact that media has on children and youth. Several saw this in a positive light, citing the Internet's capacity for

world-wide communication that can be both empowering and overwhelming. Others saw an increasing need for children to become critical consumers of media.

> *Children in the North are socialized by television and are learning about a "foreign" culture that looks much better than their own community.*

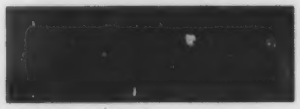
According to one Northern respondent, increased electronic communication in the North caused unrealistic student expectations which resulted in frustration and depression.

Some view the technological revolution as increasing the gap between the "haves" and the "have nots." While many acknowledge the need for computer literacy and media awareness, schools require tremendous financial investments in hardware, software, and resource personnel.

Some respondents expressed concerns about students who have difficulty adjusting to regular classrooms. Alternative programs, they say, are required to meet the needs of these students.

> *A secondary intervention program is a necessity for students who cannot and should not be expected to function in a regular-stream classroom.*

In addition, numerous respondents suggested that a nonacademic counselor should be present in schools to support students with personal problems. Career counseling and work-experience programs can also be an important service for students as they make the transition to work and postsecondary education.



If schools are to be responsible for socializing students, it follows that more trained personnel are required. Many respondents expressed concern over the difficulty of acquiring and keeping skilled teaching staff.

> *The lack of qualified teachers is becoming a concern, especially for rural areas where teachers are required to teach a variety of subject areas.*

Many respondents cited shortages of teachers in the areas of Special Education, Industrial and Vocational Arts, Senior Math, and Senior Sciences. One school division stated:

> *Incentives will have to be provided, and the issue of keeping young teachers in the teaching force after they start teaching also needs to be addressed.*

Several respondents were concerned about the difficulty of recruiting teachers in the North, especially in schools where the effects of federal funding can influence other factors (e.g.,

teacher contracts, certification). Lack of qualified teachers can affect the maintenance of curriculum standards and contribute to inequities in educational standards. Respondents indicate that government needs to improve teachers' working conditions and offer special incentives to encourage qualified teachers to seek employment in the North. In addition, increased recruitment and training of Aboriginal teachers is required for Northern and urban placements.

It is understood that teaching is a caring profession. Teachers' roles and duties, however, have intensified over the years to undermine the caring component of the job.

> *Too many students in classes, mainstreaming of special needs children without adequate support, unremitting criticism and unrealistic expectations from the community, all of these factors (and others, too) have reduced the emotional resources of teachers.*

Many respondents indicate there are too many demands on teachers' time, noting that teachers constantly deal with things that do not relate to the classroom. In addition, teachers require professional development and frequent in-service to help deal with the diverse needs of their students.

> *Professional development must be ongoing for all teachers in areas such as poverty, Aboriginal issues, FAS, depression, etc. These students are part of the school and community and do not stay with one specialized individual constantly.*

As a practical way of acquiring more time for in-service, one respondent mentioned the possibility of a longer school year for teachers. Another felt that teachers and school boards need to expand the concept of what *school* is and encourage more risktaking among teachers.

Chronic underfunding of education has resulted in higher student-teacher ratios, making it difficult for teachers to meet every student's needs. As a respondent indicated:

> *The provision of adequate funding for schools would do much to alleviate classroom challenges. It would enable reasonable student/teacher ratios, allow behaviorally challenged students to be effectively worked with, and would allow adequate support services for schools and students.*

One respondent expressed concern that teacher education programs are not training teachers for the reality of the classroom. Another respondent took the view that change is a slow process.

> *Changing a vast organization such as the schools takes time and effort, and there have traditionally been few resources made available for bringing about true implementation of educational innovation.*

4. Specifically, how can people and organizations work together to meet these needs?

In response to the question, "Specifically, how can people and organizations work together to meet these needs?" five themes emerged: (a) interagency cooperation, (b) increased funding, (c) parental and community involvement, (d) equal educative opportunities, and (e) increased school support.

Most respondents indicated that collaboration and cooperation among school, community, and service providers is crucial. As well, interagency cooperation among Social Services, Mental Health, Justice, and Child and Youth Services is critical for meeting the needs of children and youth. There were a variety of suggestions pertaining to methods of delivery. Some respondents, for example, believe that the services need to be collapsed under one roof to provide effective, seamless service. Other respondents reasoned that schools need a case manager-coordinator who would work with other agencies. Some respondents indicated a need to have funding for their own human-resources personnel (e.g., guidance counselors, school social workers, educational psychologists, and occupational therapists). Many respondents view the school as a focal point for the community and, therefore, a logical place to house agencies that could then act as outreach providers.

> *The hub of these services should be education because the clients regularly meet here.*

It is important to note that for all related agencies to operate efficiently, boundaries must be coterminus. As one respondent noted:

> *A new approach to service delivery involves risk, but risk should not be discouraged.*

The context in which schools operate places additional pressures on them as educational institutions. Respondents believe increased funding for education is necessary to support the increased demand for services, programs, capital-building projects, and personnel.

> *If teachers are now fulfilling roles beyond their professional training, and if a full-service delivery is to be continued, governments must provide legislation to allocate funds to education to continue to allow schools to provide these services.*

There needs to be clear communication among parents, schools, and organizations. Responses from school divisions indicate that increased parental participation and increased volunteerism in schools would benefit everyone.

> *Parents should be involved with the school in order to be better informed and prepared to help their children succeed at school, but also to make the school a more authentic environment. Parents should also be involved in order to be better prepared for their role as an educator at home, in creating a controlled learning environment.*

It should be noted that many parents, because of work commitments, would not be able to undertake this role. This means recognizing the valuable contribution of stay-at-home parents to the overall well being of the child. To allow all parents to participate in their child's education, one respondent suggested that flexible unpaid leave should be legislated to allow workers to attend to family responsibilities, such as teacher and school meetings.

One way of increasing parental and community involvement is to educate the community about educational and school needs, perhaps tapping into corporations and organizations for funding.

> *Strengthening parent and community involvement and building partnerships in education and meeting community needs [were] seen as being positive. Because each school and its community is unique, with different needs, resources, and expectations, the ways in which the community, its families, and the school become involved varies considerably. Consequently, the type of partnerships developed will vary from one school and community to another.*

Respondents recognized the value of community-based initiatives such as "Take Your Kids to Work." Schools should involve the community in helping students to prepare for work. This may mean encouraging local experts and seeking cooperative partnerships. Such initiatives could benefit the community by creating work and volunteer experiences. Clearly, students need a variety of learning opportunities, both in and outside the school. Some respondents said there should be increased funding for recreation in local communities. One school division suggested collaboration.

> *Community groups and the school may want to plan together for before, after, and during school activities.*

Many respondents were concerned about what they saw as insufficient financial support from government to meet the technological needs of schools. It is apparent that more funding for teacher training and technical services is required.

> *With the playing field in students' homes not level for all students regarding access to technology, schools must ensure that all have adequate access to current technology. Funding, Internet, and electronic mail capabilities is a coming problem.*

In addition to technology, respondents indicated:

> *Alternative forms of delivery of education services need to be explored - distance, youth internship, apprenticeship, increasing links between school, business, and industry.*

Many respondents also identified a need for common standards of education that would apply to all schools across the province. These suggestions may address some of the inequities in our educational system. As one respondent stated:

> *A student is a student, regardless of where they live, and their educational opportunities should reflect that.*

Many respondents indicated the need for more community-based programs, more community schools, and community secondary schools. Provincial education policies could be revised to allow greater structural flexibility at the local level to help schools respond to the specific needs of their community. One Northern school division voiced a need for the recognition of the large numbers of at-risk, high-needs students in their communities and the need for resources required to address this. Many off-reserve and Métis students do not have an advocate to support their unique needs. Northern school divisions seek support in developing a process to effectively involve the Aboriginal peoples in helping to determine ways and means to meet the needs of their children.

Some respondents indicated that schools should be more responsive to students' changing needs; routine reviews of school programs could attend to this. Respondents' suggestions included alternative schooling for high-risk individuals; a decrease in the amount of time it takes to transfer students to alternative schools; and a province-wide data base, cosponsored by all government agencies that deal with students or families, to share common data to track transiency and to determine needs without infringing on confidentiality.

Respondents indicated that if full-service delivery is to be continued, governments must provide increased services within schools. This may take the form of increased staffing, increased training of current staff, and a continued commitment on behalf of schools to maintain the basics, balanced with programs suited to all levels of learners.

> *There was a strong affirmation that teachers at the local level need to be supported, that there needs to be a realistic understanding regarding demands on a teacher as well as the challenges schools face, and that teachers deserve to be fairly compensated.*

Several school divisions referred to the benefits and value of schools in the urban and rural communities. They indicated that the presence of schools is vital to the health of the community and to its children and families. Local schools help children develop a sense of belonging, gives them a sense of ownership of their education, and helps them view themselves as part of a larger community.

In summary, the comments of respondents suggest a few observations. First, it is evident that children and youth are affected by changes in society. Second, schools and communities are faced with complex challenges that can only be met through collaboration and cooperation. Third, stakeholders recognize the need to build extended partnerships and initiate structural changes within governmental agencies. And finally, it is critical that there be consensus about the role of schools and that all stakeholders support change and commit to meeting the needs of children and youth.

Unique Responses From Rural and Northern Communities

Much of what the Task Force heard could apply to all areas of the province; however, there were some unique responses from both rural and Northern areas. Geographical, economic, and cultural factors appear to create unique challenges to the role of the school in these areas.

Rural Areas

The comments of these school divisions are representative of what the Task Force heard about the social pressures on rural communities.

> *Communities in rural Saskatchewan are faced with continued depopulation, increasing distances between services, and aging facilities. People in rural areas are faced with a depressed agricultural economy, the effects of which are felt by all.* (School Division Presentation)

> *A child's need for belonging is undermined by a number of contributing factors: dual-parent workforce, single parents, economic difficulties, increasing mobility of families, larger centralized schools outside of the community, and high pupil-teacher ratio.* (School Division Presentation)

There are many stresses on families related to the isolation and distance from major centers, financial difficulties, increased travel, single-parent or dual-income families, and weak parenting skills. These stresses can result in a decrease of emotional and psychological support that children need if they are to develop normally. Farming parents, who are forced to take jobs outside the farm to support farm income, have little time to lend support to the school.

Some school divisions note that some youth are engaged in high-risk behavior, linked to negative peer pressure, drugs, alcohol, bullying, and violence. To help develop positive self-image and improved self-esteem, adolescents need positive involvement in sports, access to cultural activities, and involvement in community-based programs.

One rural trustee summed up the crisis by commenting, "The crisis in agriculture is threatening our entire existence, our lifestyle."

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Rural Areas

Theme One

The continuing farm crisis, accompanied by depopulation, is having a negative effect on rural families.

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One rural trustee summed up the crisis by commenting, "The crisis in agriculture is threatening our entire existence, our lifestyle."

Theme Two

The continuing farm crisis, accompanied by depopulation, is having a negative effect on the schooling of children and youth in rural communities.

Trustees, administrators, and parents note that many of the problems associated with the failing farm economy are being felt in schools. Declining enrollments are forcing schools - which have been focal points in many rural communities - to close. Rural school closures have resulted in children being sent to already overcrowded centers. Various respondents were concerned about the increasing number of children attending centralized schools outside their home community. The following comment represents the fear that rural people feel about losing their schools.

> *Education keeps rural communities together. It keeps them sustainable. If we lose this, what's left?* (Rural Trustee)

Rural school districts express concern that students in smaller communities do not have the same choices and opportunities of students living in larger communities. Administrators note that rural schools have less funding available for, and less access to, technological supports. Valuable programs, such as work experience, are more difficult to offer in rural areas.

Students that presented to the Task Force observe that rural students take pride in their communities and schools, and they worry about the effect of the deteriorating farm economy on their communities and schools. These students do not like to take classes via a computer (distance education) - they believe teachers are the key to their education. They also note that, as the rural student population decreases, the variety of class offerings decreases.

Northern Areas

Theme One

Northern schools and communities have unique needs that require flexibility in decision making.

Northern Aboriginal workers, parents, and trustees note that the uniqueness of Northern and rural communities is not recognized. Trustees note that Northern school divisions face unique challenges because of their isolation and because of the large geographical areas they serve. Such communities need more freedom to design school structures that meet their needs.

Northern Aboriginal workers note that the needs of Northern children, youth, and communities differ from the needs of groups in the south. Northern Aboriginal workers explain that "outsiders" do not understand their needs: Their expectations, forms, and standards are not adjusted to Northern conditions and circumstances.

Teachers in Northern communities (as well as rural) note that educational decision makers often use urban contexts to make decisions regarding structural and programming changes. They

suggest the specific needs of Northern (and rural) communities must be considered when such decisions are made in the future.

Communities need many types of supports and services to ensure that children are better prepared for school. Many respondents expressed concerns about the increasing distance for services and about the aging (or nonexistent) facilities that house sports and recreation for children, youth, and families.

Theme Two

Traditional culture needs to be more strongly incorporated into Northern schools.

Northern trustees, especially, explain that the loss of traditional culture in the North has left children and youth with few common moral values to live by.

> *Children in the North are socialized by television and are learning about a foreign culture that looks much better than their own community.* (School Division Presentation)

Aboriginal language, culture, and elders need to be part of the school program to reinforce traditional culture. This requires additional expertise and resources.

Theme Three

Northern schools need to be supported to meet the needs of high numbers of at-risk students.

Teachers believe that dysfunctional families, poverty, the lack of support from extended family members, parents who lack parenting skills, and a society that fails to take responsibility for caring for, disciplining, and guiding youth have contributed to the problems children and youth are experiencing. This situation has been exacerbated in Northern communities because of high unemployment.

Northern trustees note that children and youth in Northern communities have many issues to deal with. Their way of life is changing quickly and many of the older people in the community (who would normally provide direction to youth) are not coping well with the loss of their culture, language, and customs. Also, when students finish school they often have to leave the communities they grew up in to find employment.

One Northern school division voiced a need for recognition of the large numbers of at-risk, high-needs students in their communities and the need for resources to address this. Many off-reserve and Métis students do not have an advocate to support their unique needs. Northern school divisions seek support in developing a process to effectively involve Aboriginal peoples in helping to determine ways and means to meet the needs of their children.

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Rural and Northern Areas

Theme One

Rural and Northern schools require access to technology, alternative forms of delivery, and common standards that will give them equity with urban schools.

Many school divisions expressed concern that students need to access technology to compete in an ever-increasing electronic world. Staying current with information technology and providing students with trained teachers and resources causes financial strain for many boards. The decline in rural enrollments can make it difficult to provide full-service education. Access to computers and the effective use of computers in the classroom require additional staff, resources, and technology. Province-wide access to the universal high-speed Internet needs to be in place to have some degree of equity between rural and urban schools. Student access to computers, however, is not enough. To maximize computers in the classroom, teachers need support to integrate it into their teaching.

In addition to technology, respondents indicated that

> *Alternative forms of delivery of education services need to be explored: distance, youth internship, apprenticeship, increasing links between school business and industry.* (School Division Presentation)

Many respondents also identify a need for common standards of education that would apply to all schools across the province. These suggestions may address some of the inequities in our educational system. As one respondent stated:

> *A student is a student, regardless of where they live, and their educational opportunities should reflect that.* (School Division Presentation)

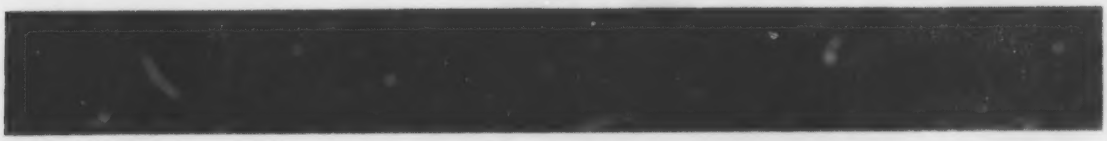
Educational policies need to be flexible enough to allow for local differences. Parents note that Saskatchewan Education does not acknowledge the differences between rural and urban schools. Parents note that educational solutions that work for urban schools often do not work when applied to rural schools.

Theme Two

Rural and Northern school divisions experience difficulty recruiting and keeping qualified staff.

If schools are to be responsible for socializing students, it follows that more trained personnel are required. Many respondents expressed concern over the difficulty of acquiring and keeping skilled teaching staff. The lack of qualified teachers is becoming a concern, especially in rural and Northern areas where teachers are required to teach a variety of subject areas.

Rural and Northern Areas



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Many respondents cited shortages of teachers in the areas of Special Education, Industrial and Vocational Arts, Senior Math, and Senior Sciences. One school division stated:

> *Incentives will have to be provided, and the issue of keeping young teachers in the teaching force after they start teaching also needs to be addressed.*

Several respondents were concerned about the difficulty of recruiting teachers in the North. Lack of qualified teachers can affect the maintenance of curriculum standards and contribute to inequities in educational standards. Respondents indicate that government needs to improve teachers' working conditions and offer special incentives to encourage qualified teachers to seek employment in the North. In addition, increased recruitment and training of Aboriginal teachers is required.

SECTION 3

THE TASK FORCE RESPONSE: VISION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force Response: Vision and Recommendations

In Part 1 of what follows we specifically address the *Terms of Reference* that were given to the Task Force by the Minister of Education. Part 2 represents our interim deliberations and reflections upon the extensive body of data we collected from our consultations; the Task Force then moves on to wrestle with these issues and concerns in its attempt to find solutions and make recommendations. Finally, we summarize the recommendations that emerged from our analysis in Part 2. For a full statement of our *Terms of Reference* please see Appendix 8.

Part 1: Response to the *Terms of Reference*

The "Objectives" cited below are taken directly from the *Terms of Reference* (Appendix 8) given to the Task Force by the Minister of Education; what follows is a statement of our general "Response":

Objective 1 *Facilitate informed dialogue within the education community and among other human service sectors, family members and the public.*

and

Objective 2 *Raise awareness and gain support among stakeholders and the public regarding the challenges and responsibilities schools embrace, including the extent to which the personal and social circumstances of children and youth impact on the quality of their education.*

Response: These objectives - 'to facilitate informed dialogue,' to 'raise awareness,' and 'gain support' - were the reason the Task Force created a very extensive consultation process. This process engaged more than 20 communities, and over 30 school divisions. In each case we held a dialogue with the same 'role-alike' groups that included central office administrators, students, community agencies, in-school administrators, teachers, parents and trustees. As well, there were general invitations run in a number of newspapers inviting input from the communities at large; these presentations were heard separately by members of the Task Force team..

Then in May, hearings were held in three different locations in the province, with multiple presentations by a wide variety of interested parties and stakeholders at each, including any school divisions not included in the earlier round of consultations that wished to take part.

An outline of the consultation process may be found in Part 1 (What We Did), and a full catalogue of all of the Task Force's data-gathering activities can be found in Appendix 1.

In the consultation process we made a concerted effort to consult with all of the major educational stakeholders, as well as the large spectrum of other persons and agencies who might have an interest in schools, or who might wish to express their

views in relation to such matters. It should be noted that an attempt was also made to include representative geographical areas of the province within our consultation: north-south, rural-urban, and so on. Our purpose in these consultations was both to listen, and *also to converse* (in keeping with the Minister's purpose in creating us as a Task Force and a "Public Dialogue"). The results of this dialogue are found in Section 2 of this *Report* which contains an extensive analysis of (a) the *general themes* that emerge from the consultation; (b) *an analysis* of each of the *'role-alike'* groups; (c) an analysis of data from our May hearings; and (d) an analysis of the uniqueness of Northern and rural responses.

We believe that the consultation has been very thorough, and we have taken careful pains to record all of the input we received. We feel that informed dialogue has been facilitated (Objective 1), and that awareness has been raised with respect to the challenges and responsibilities schools embrace (Objective 2); we also feel confident that support amongst the stakeholders for schools, as they face these challenges and responsibilities, has been encouraged and enhanced.

Objective 3 *Identify the extent to which there is a gap between expectations of schools and their capacity to respond along with family, community and other agencies, in support of the healthy development and education of children.*

Response: Our response is that **there is a gap**, or rather, there are *several* gaps (A to C):

A. *There is a gap between the services for children and youth that are needed, and the capacity of the system to deliver these services.*

Schools are certainly attempting to fulfill the role for which they have been traditionally mandated: to educate children and youth and to provide enriching and informative learning experiences. But it is unrealistic to attempt to address academic educational needs when the children who appear in the school present basic needs that are not met - food, clothing, and emotional security. Currently there are significant numbers of children who present these needs, and the school must attempt to meet these needs before a meaningful education can take place.

The extent of the changes impacting schools in recent times cannot be overestimated: 22% of Saskatchewan youth under the age of 18 live in poverty, and the number is even higher for children under the age of 5; demographic changes are profound - by 2016 a full one third of Saskatchewan's population will be of Aboriginal descent, and nearly half of the children ages 5 to 17 will be Aboriginal; already today, in some medium-sized urban centres, the student population of Aboriginal descent is estimated to be 40%, and even higher; Saskatchewan has the second highest teen-pregnancy rate in Canada, with 12% of live births to teen mothers ages 10 to 17 years; in the past decade the inclusion of children presenting significant mental and physical disorders, FAS, FES and the like, has risen noticeably.

In its efforts to address these issues, the school is often called upon to step beyond its traditional mandate. This effort stretches the resources of the school, sometimes to a breaking point; it also commits the school to new partnerships with all of the other human service agencies which relate to children.

This attempt at partnerships is relatively new, for schools and for the other agencies. None of the parties to this cooperative effort have been designed to collaborate; all took on their organizational shape pretty much as stand-alone entities, each with its own policies, practices and protocols: the metaphor of stovepipes comes to mind. Under the circumstances, the effort to collaborate does not come easily or naturally, and it is above all time-consuming. What does come naturally under such circumstances is a certain amount of colliding and crunching, inevitably leading to stress and dis-stress.

The human services 'system' has yet to develop an integrated capacity; although there have certainly been some positive developments. Most notable of these efforts are the establishment of the Regional Intersectoral Committees (the RIC's), the ADM's Forum (now known as the Human Services Integration Forum - HSIF), and the promotion by the Department of Education of the "Wrap Around" approach to case management for at risk children. It is, nevertheless, apparent that however it is organized, the system currently lacks sufficient resources to meet the needs of children adequately and effectively.

B. *There is thus a gap between what schools are attempting to do, and what they perceive their role should be.*

The effort to respond to very basic needs of children, in addition to the educational needs, is very demanding. The amount of effort, and other resources available to go around, is finite; naturally a greater concentration of effort on behalf of basic needs means less time and attention to some of the educational needs. The gap between what schools are now attempting to do and the idea of what they *should be doing* thus contributes to a syndrome of stress and frustration which has become unhealthy, and even dysfunctional (on the part of both educators, and society in general).

The question that schools ask, and society needs to ask is: ***what is the real role(s) of the school?*** Under these circumstances, clarification, fresh ideas, and a serious effort to rethink the mission, mandate and resources available to schools and schooling, has become imperative!

It is also imperative that we overcome the "blame-defence" mentality. Everyone involved in the lives of children and youth - our whole society! - has a vital stake in this effort to rethink schools and schooling: parents and families; governmental and nongovernmental organizations and agencies; schools, colleges and universities, all need to be engaged in this vital task. The future of our society, province and country depends upon it. Even the most well intentioned single-

agency efforts are bound to fail. The time has come for us as a province to reach back to our historic traditions of caring and justice; innovation and cooperation; and vigorous, self-sacrificial resolve, to ensure that our province becomes a community of hope for our children.

C. *There is a gap between what schools are attempting to do, and what they can do well.*

In the present climate, and given present understandings, an extremely troubled mood prevails over schools and schooling. The trouble stems from:

(a) the *ambiguity* about what *role the school should play* (hence the part to be played by school staffs, and the whole school enterprise); and

(b) the fact that schools, and services for children generally, are *organized and funded along traditional lines*, when the manifestation of needs presented to schools, and other human service agencies, has radically changed.

In their attempt to address all of the needs presented by children in their charge, schools typically feel unsure about what they are supposed to be doing, and quite sure that whatever it is, they are not doing it as well as they would like to!

What is needed in this situation is a *fresh vision* for meeting the needs of children and youth. What is needed is a *shared vision* for nurturing, supporting and educating children. All of us who are responsible for children's lives need to come together - beyond blame and defence, turf and 'red tape,' rights and entitlement - to assume a collective and a cooperative responsibility. Parents, schools, government, church and community organizations, all have a vital role to play.

Part 2: Towards a New Vision for Schools and Human Services

Hearing from so many people, from every sector of society, and from all parts of the province, proved to be a powerful and formative experience for the members of the Task Force. We listened and conversed; we toured facilities; we read submissions, and research reports on the data we had gathered. We were alternately impressed and pleased, troubled and disturbed. We thought long and hard about the impressions we were gathering, and we had vigorous discussions with each other about the issues and concerns being raised. We began to develop a deep appreciation for the wide range of needs, and the diversity of children and youth represented in our schools. We also developed a great respect for the challenge that faces educators today. What follows are the results of our deliberations based on this experience, and these conversations.

1. Mission Impossible

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing public education today is the sheer diversity of the needs represented by children and youth. Faced with such diversity, the Task Force immediately acknowledges the ethical issue relating to the importance of affirming and accepting *all children*. This principle is, surely, foundational for every educational enterprise worthy of the name. Along this line there is obvious need to eliminate vestiges of prejudice and discrimination, and to overcome barriers of understanding created by differences of cultural background and life experience. Some definite progress has been made in this direction, but everyone would acknowledge that we still have a considerable way to go.

Having listened to many presentations over the past year, as well as following numerous programs and articles in the national and provincial media, however, we could not help but note the incoherence that characterizes public expectations for schools and schooling, especially given the diversity of children and their needs that teachers and schools face every day. The incoherence resides in the fact that the sets of goals and objectives we, as a public, have established for schools are competing, and are often incompatible with one another. Even where our expectations and goals are laudable, we have assigned them to schools and teachers without sufficient resources. The Task Force sees the role of the school as 'mission impossible.'

Not infrequently we heard parents and school board officials say of teachers, "I don't know how they cope!" We heard from teachers, "I have to spend so much time on everything else - if only I was given an opportunity to teach!"

Consider the fact that no matter what the diversity, we want schools to model equality, and individual classrooms to reflect the principle of equal citizenry. Sometimes we even hear from interest groups that equality of opportunity is not enough, and that it is time we held schools to an equality of outcomes! Yet we also want student achievement measured, often on the basis of standardized tests, so that the results can be compared with other national, and international results, and we want academic standards maintained, especially in the three R's. After all, students must be equipped to compete in the global economy! In the same breath schools are held to high expectations about retention rates, and of course, given the current restlessness of ratepayers, costs should be reduced!

Many, perhaps all of these expectations taken in and of themselves, are laudable and good but taken as a whole they are at best competing, and at worst they are incoherent - a formula for stress, and distress. As for the media, the discourse around schooling they seem to prefer - and certainly which they promote! - seems all too often to sound like a cacophony, usually loud, too often shrill, and always highly demanding.

The Task Force recognizes the difficulty of addressing a recommendation to this sort of confusion and malaise. Perhaps the best that can be done under the circumstances is to

name the whirlwind. Sometimes the name itself has utility, if only to divert attention from the exercise of individual blame and condemnation.

RECOMMENDATION 1

That all educational stakeholders recognize the complexity and multiplicity of the role(s) assigned to schools today. So diverse and incompatible are these expectations that they verge on incoherence. The first step is to recognize that a major effort of mission clarification is called for, and that under the circumstances, no single - and certainly no simple ! - solution will be forthcoming.

2. Who Fails Children?

One of the pieces of popular wisdom and insight about the education of children today, in the media, sometimes amongst educators, and even out on the street, takes the form of a question - why are schools failing kids today? Given what is perceived by some to be declining basic skills, like literacy and numeracy, amongst children and youth, as well as behavioural standards like civility, doubtless society is looking for a scapegoat. Schools come conveniently to hand. Although the Task Force has recommendations that amount to reform for schools, it is not at all our perception that they deserve to be painted as culprits. Schools are a reflection of the societies in which they are situated.

What the Task Force heard most repeatedly is that family life, and family structures and relationships, are undergoing fundamental change and challenge. They include: two working spouse families and single parents who have difficulty finding time for their children; rising divorce rates, and casual sexual and cohabitational practices; as well as economic pressures and poverty that skew, and even poison, relationships with children. Sometimes the phenomenon was described as "falling apart." All of these changes in family life, however, whether culpable or not, are having a profound impact on children, and through children they are impacting schools and teachers. Certainly the numbers of 'at-risk' students appear to have been steadily increasing over the past decade.

As a result schools and teachers seem to have been cast in the role of social saviour: over and over we heard teachers lament that they have now become 'surrogate parents' - open the school early, for drop off; close it late, after parents have finished work; feed and clothe children when they are neglected; provide a 'safe house' and contact Social Services when family neglect or violence is apparent; provide all the experiences and learnings necessary for children to succeed in life - health, technology, career, values, and any other 'deficits' that have or will be identified. And, judging from the students with whom we spoke, the issue of parenting, and questions of quality time, were not isolated to urban, or even core areas: the refrain came from pretty much everywhere, and everyone, north-south, rural-urban, and Aboriginal-non-Aboriginal. The issue of concern over the nurture and support of children and youth appears to be no respecter of persons, or places. Everyone is implicated.

But there is little point in merely shifting the blame onto parents, for they too are part of larger economic and social systems, with their own characteristic values, beliefs, cultures, and pressures. If the language of failure must be invoked at all, and we are not sure that it is especially helpful, then it must target everyone, and the whole society: if anyone is failing children and youth today, it is all of us - corporations, governments (of all kinds), schools, families and churches included. And by the same token, we all have an opportunity to be part of the solution!

RECOMMENDATION 2

That schools, and schooling, be viewed by educational policy makers and stakeholders as constructions of a society which, at the same time, they reflect. If schools need to be reformed, there is a strong likelihood that attention will also have to be given to other aspects of society and social policy.

3. A Broader Vision for Community Schools

The "Community School" program described in Section 2, initiated by the Department of Education in the 1980s, is one of the most helpful, and hopeful, changes in 'doing school' to be initiated in recent times. Community schools need to be experienced to be believed. The sense of mission, the variety of programs and interventions, the differences that can be noted between how students speak of their school compared to students in other schools, for example, in relation to the involvement of parents in school activities, are all most remarkable. Of course there are differences between community schools; some differences reflect differences between communities, or between individual leadership styles within the schools. In other cases, however, differences are evident that reflect the depth of commitment to fundamental community school philosophy.

Generally speaking, however, the community school program needs to be seen as a great success, and in the view of the Task Force the program should be expanded. Committed to partnership between school staffs, parents and communities, they are the right way to 'do' school. Ideally, community schools have the potential to become the hub of the community, offering programs and other support services that benefit everyone, preschoolers, parents and other adults, as well as school-age children and youth. They also maximize the use of the school facility, making it available around the clock. In short, community schools represent an excellent investment for society to make. They are especially helpful where a significant numbers of children are 'at risk,' but their value is universal, and their philosophy should be promoted throughout the province.

There are some difficulties regarding the criteria associated with the current implementation of the program. School officials speak of the annual community school "lottery"; obviously, there are financial constraints around how many schools can be designated in any given year, and how many of the new applications will be accepted. There are also anomalies created by the criteria themselves. The criteria specify a certain

level of Aboriginal children, for example, assuming that these children will tend to be congregated in specific areas of a city (so-called 'core' and perimeter areas). In some urban areas, even where there may be a significant Aboriginal population, it can be distributed quite widely throughout the city rather than congregated. Without special consideration no school in urban areas such as this will meet Community School eligibility.

Another anomaly that we encountered is the discrepancy between the Community School funding formulas employed for communities in the northern part of the province, compared to those employed in the south - it is alleged that the Northern formula is less generous. If this is indeed the case, the situation needs to be rectified, since the community profiles typical of the North appear to be just the sort of the profile envisaged for community school programming.

In our view, however, the most serious problem with the community school program is that it did not include high schools, only elementary schools. In some communities, special initiatives have been undertaken by particular school systems, and even by particular school staffs, to create high schools along the lines of an 'alternate' community school model. Nutana High School in Saskatoon, for example, and St. Mary's in Prince Albert, would fall in this category, and there are others. In the view of the Task Force the expansion of the Community School program to high schools is now an imperative.

Currently, the transition of children from community schools to traditionally run high schools is especially awkward, and surely all of the adjustment should not fall on the shoulders of the elementary school to help the child prepare for this abrupt transition.

Other aspects of the program do, however, appear to be working well. The requirement for eligibility that calls for a staff to come up with a plan for the conversion of their school to community school status, demonstrating a knowledge of, and commitment to, its principles and practices, seems sound and is generally well accepted. This procedure should be retained. And most conspicuously, the program flexibility created by the injection of incremental funds into the school on the basis of the formula, not to mention the additional human resources, are welcome and effective.

Given its remarkable success and evident benefits, not only for children but for parents and the whole community, the Task Force is of the view that the time has come for a major 'community school initiative' in our province. The community school philosophy should be promoted as the universal philosophy for all schools. A more flexible funding formula would permit allocation of the incremental resources at the school division level, where variable needs and the relative merits of opportunities would be more easily assessed.

RECOMMENDATION 3

That the philosophy of community schools be adopted for all schools in Saskatchewan, and that special measures be created to promote and support this initiative at the level of the Department; these should include but not be limited to:

3.1 The identification of a number of schools in the province as 'model community/alternate schools' (on the basis of "best practices"), and the allocation of a special fund to:

(a) support these schools in such a way as to permit them to become resource schools for other educators throughout the province, and,

(b) permit the visits of educators from elsewhere in the province to these schools (i.e., to defray their travel costs), and to permit visits by resource persons from the model school to other interested schools.

3.2 A review of the funding formula supporting community schools, so as to permit universal application of the program, more flexibility at the local level, and the elimination of what appear to be unjustified differentials in funding such as between northern and southern schools, and between schools that were created in the initial group of schools, and those which qualified later.

By "universal application" the Task Force does not intend a mechanical application of the current community school funding formula to all schools. As desirable as such a measure might be, it is financially unrealistic and probably unnecessary. What we are committed to is the universal implementation of the community school *philosophy* in all schools (not all of which has funding implications per se), and *a significant increase in funding* to support a much greater implementation of its practices and programs.

3.3 Thus, we envisage a significant increase in the funding allotment provided by Government to the Department of Education to support this recommended community school enhancement initiative.

4. Early Intervention

The Task Force is gratified with the revival of interest in, and commitment to, early childhood education. Brain research, especially its findings relating to the very early years from conception to age three; the findings of educational psychologists; and

anecdotal evidence available from educators who work with prekindergarten programs, all point to the vital importance of a rich environment for young children as a necessary condition for normal cognitive and social development in later years. During our consultations, Task Force members heard the testimony of workers in prekindergarten programs in the province, and they learned of the benefit of these programs for school readiness. We also saw evidence of how these programs, and school nutrition programs, can be integrated into parent education programs to salient effect. In other parts of the world, as we are now becoming aware, this area of child support and education has wisely received more attention and more resources than it has hitherto received in Canada, or for that matter, here in Saskatchewan.

The expansion and promotion of early-intervention programs is manifestly an 'inter-agency' matter: it calls for, and requires, both human and financial inputs from a number of key human service agencies, including Health, Social Services and Education. The value of including parent education within this initiative seems transparent and obvious.

Although our preference would be for prekindergarten programs to be universally available (not, obviously, compulsory!) we understand that the costs associated with such an initiative would be prohibitive, and that any enhancement of such programs in the current financial environment would have to be limited to areas that demonstrate the most critical social and economic need. Nevertheless, we believe that steps in this direction are urgently indicated, and should be taken at the earliest possible date.

RECOMMENDATION 4

That early intervention and prekindergarten programming be significantly expanded. That where feasible it be included within a community school. And further, we urge that this initiative be undertaken as an interagency initiative, involving at least the Departments of Health, Social Services and Education, and that it typically include an adult education component that focuses on topics like parenting, disease, nutrition, the creation of rich learning environments, as well as prenatal seminars.

5. High School Reform

Although high schools were alluded to in connection with the proposed expansion of the Community School program in the province, the Task Force believes that high school education merits special attention at this time. It is ironic that even though the highest incidence of school dropout occurs during the high school years, secondary schools were not included in the Community School program. The disconnect between the pedagogical approach and school culture of community schools, and that of traditional high schools, is really quite stark.

At the same time, it could not be more apparent that the province needs a wide variety of high schools, catering to a wide variety of life experiences, and with diverse career

objectives. Certainly there is a growing number of 'at risk' high school students, and we need to see more experimentation in terms of alternative forms of program delivery and other services to support these students. But, at the same time there are students with specialist ambitions who are looking for IB (International Baccalaureate) programs, courses such as Law and Calculus, and strong Music, Drama and athletic offerings. In the end, all kinds of high schools are needed, and no one-dimensional vision for secondary education will meet everyone's needs.

We are not there yet. For the most part, the structure and rhythm of high schools today do not look a whole lot different from what they did in the 1960s - the school year, the starting time for the day (8:30 a.m.), the six-day timetable, the semester system, the defined course load and attendance policy, and so on, look very much as they did three or four decades ago. Not all schools need to be 'alternate' schools, of course, and the traditional approach still meets the needs of many students, but the needs of too many students are not met. There are significant and growing pressures reflecting changes in students' lives today that indicate an urgent need for reform.

Although the sort of reform we have in mind is in part captured by the concept of community schools, its scope needs to be much broader, and it needs to include many of the basic elements that have characterized high school education for decades.
The following bulleted ideas contain the seeds of a potential recommendation; but before achieving this status, they require the benefit of scrutiny, discussion and further reflection:

- the school day (must all high schools begin at 8:30 a.m.?);
- the school year (does 10 months on and 2 months off still really suit most students?);
- the merits of alternative program delivery systems, including modular offerings (Copernican, etc.), versus the traditional semester system;
- the merits of adapting school to the 'part-time' students who, because of work commitments, or for other reasons, wish to pursue their high school education over something more than the prescribed four years (Grades 9 to 12), especially Grades 11 and 12;
- the promotion of the Integrated School-Linked Services (ISLS) model for the involvement of resource persons from departments outside of Education, such as Social Services, Health and Justice, in the support of high school students' success;
- the possibility of a graduated 'campus' approach whereby school structure and expectations over the high school years are gradually modified so that by Grades 11 and 12 a 'college' model rather than a 'school' model, is apparent (with adult learners as the basis of pedagogy);
- the college model will, obviously, have implications for school attendance policies;
- on the theme of adult learners, perhaps it is time to seriously question the 'one size fits all' approach taken to Grade 12 graduation: more choices of different but equally valued and supported options, appealing to the differing needs, interests and career objectives of a diverse student population, seem worthy of serious consideration;
- on this theme, the current practice of judges sentencing youths to school seems especially dubious - since when have schools become penal institutions, and school staffs wardens? Or, if this sort of practice is deemed socially necessary, then a

different kind of resource must be made available to schools, and a strong interagency approach needs to be taken. Although there is evidence of some cooperation along these lines in parts of the province, where probation workers are in close liaison with school administrators, there does not appear to be any kind of consistency in policy overall, or policy directive that assures schools that the necessary personnel resources will be made available to a school receiving sentenced individuals;

- the need for *recovery programs* for adult students who, after dropping out, want to complete their Grade 12 (but cannot be funded after age 21 in a high school program);
- the reassignment of responsibility for the education of youths in custody (under YOA), together with complete budgetary support, to the Department of Education, with a view to bringing the service more into line with mainstream curriculum, and with a view to supporting and promoting reentry as citizens;
- in the event of court orders requiring school attendance, the recognition of a clear burden of responsibility on the part of courts officials to notify appropriate school officials concerning information pertaining to charges that may be of significance for the school, as permitted under current legislation.

We repeat, however, that the Task Force does not intend to encourage the notion that all high schools should take on an 'alternative' format; we are only making the point, as clearly and strongly as we can, that *in order to meet the diversity of contemporary student needs, there should be more alternative ways of 'doing' high school than there are at present in our province.* Schools should be encouraged to experiment; pilot projects should be supported; the resources of the enlarged community school initiative, endorsed by this *Report*, should be applied to supporting these efforts.

In the process of effecting this reform, educational leaders will want to pay especially careful attention to the students' needs that are essential to their success. A philosophy that builds on students' strengths must motivate and shape the high school reform agenda. *Moreover, students themselves need to be full participants in the design of changes proposed for any school.* There is no 'one size fits all,' and the determination at the local level of what schools should look like will want to take student opinion seriously into account.

The Task Force members were quite profoundly struck by the seriousness and maturity of the students with whom we spoke, everywhere in the province. They responded well to 'being taken seriously,' and 'listened to carefully.' Are we losing a valuable opportunity, and a vital resource, by not consulting our students often enough, and helping them in every way possible to feel, and be, responsible for their own education? Without wanting to exaggerate the point, perhaps our students are too often living up to our expectations, and treatment of them!

The Task Force does not have a magic formula, but we want to do whatever we can to encourage responsiveness amongst high school educators. Generally, and for obvious reasons, it does seem apparent that schools are more child-centred at the elementary level than they are at the high school level. But must the contrast be quite so extreme? Is it possible for high schools to be more student-centred, without losing subject discipline

integrity? Might it be possible that the same program integrity could be offered in multiple program-delivery formats, in different schools throughout the province?

RECOMMENDATION 5

That serious consideration by all stakeholders be given to the issue of high school reform, and that educational leaders, supported by the Department of Education, take steps to promote greater diversity in the mode of program delivery amongst high schools in the province. Further, that this reform process include as essential elements: a community school philosophy, a more student-centred approach to learning, promotion of modified program delivery, and the involvement and participation of students themselves at every stage of the process.

6. Hidden Youth

A growing and highly perplexing phenomenon in many Saskatchewan cities is the number of school-age children who are not in school ("hidden youth"). The phenomenon is perplexing at many levels: the long-term implications for the futures of these individuals, the alarming implications from a social wellness perspective, and the growing awareness gap between different sectors of society between those who know little or nothing of the situation and those who see it at alarming proportions. Knowledge of the hidden youth phenomenon is commonplace amongst workers close to the human services, whether governmental or nongovernmental: people like probation officers, social workers and legal aid lawyers. For a large sector of the rest of society, however, besides a vague sense that there are some kids 'out on the street,' there is little appreciation for the extent, the underlying causes, and the uneasy future the hidden youth phenomenon represents for society and for the individuals themselves.

Children not in school may be of any age within the school-age band, but they are most conspicuously adolescent. They are hidden just in the sense that no records are being kept of their whereabouts. They may appear on a school register as a long-term 'absent,' but until another school requests the cumulative folder for the particular child, no other action is likely to be triggered by this absence. In a community school context, absenteeism will usually be followed up by the community school coordinator, but outside of the community school network, it is not uncommon for absenteeism to become essentially disregarded - it is so prevalent and persistent that without additional resources, the task of follow-up seems hopeless.

Many absentees represent families who have moved within a city from one area to another in a search for better low-cost alternative housing; or, they may have moved from the city to a Reserve where the child may attend an Indian Band school. There may be more than one such cycle over the course of a year. To compound the tracking issue further, it is quite possible that for each term spent in the city there will be a different address, and a different school. Given patterns like this, it is not difficult for the

whereabouts of a child to be 'lost' to the school system, especially since at present there is simply no comprehensive tracking system for children between school divisions, and especially between Indian Band schools and the provincial systems. The only tracking system that does exist is when the 'cum folder' for an absentee child is requested by another school; until then, the child is simply absent. Moreover, there is little likelihood of help from other agencies. Justice will become aware of the child only if he/she offends; the child will come to the attention of Social Services only where issues of child welfare (which includes protection) come into play.

How many children are we talking about here? Obviously their 'hiddenness' means that such students are "off the record" and so the numbers are difficult to pin down, but knowledgeable educators in North Battleford, just to take one example, estimate that the number of not-in-school youth for their city is approximately 200. In Saskatoon, a community agency estimates the numbers to be in the neighbourhood of 1000. Given the relative sizes of these two urban areas, these numbers are remarkably consistent with each other, and if these estimates are anywhere near accurate, they are really quite startling!

When a full calculation of the personal and social cost of these children is taken into account, the implications for our province are almost staggering. Little imagination is required to grasp what is happening to these youth, and how they are filling in their time. Drugs, crime, teen pregnancy, prostitution, socially transmitted diseases, and self-destructive behaviours can certainly be entered into the calculation. Even more disturbing are the implications for their futures, and the personal and social costs such futures represent for them, and for society. Is this not a serious situation? And if it is, why do we hear so little about it?

The prognosis is very grim indeed. In one consultation the spokesperson for a community group was asked what message he wanted our Task Force to bring to government, the reply was an unhesitating: "If you get nothing else across, tell them we have a crisis on our hands, and if something is not done to remedy the situation, this province may become ungovernable within our lifetime!" The spokesperson's role in the Justice system in one of the province's large urban areas, and his extensive familiarity with youth behaviour patterns in that city, left the Task Force with the impression that the remark was far from mere scare-mongering.

Obviously nonattendance is only a symptom of an underlying problem. Who is failing these children and youth? Sometimes we heard from those who accused schools of 'dis-inviting children.' From others, blame was placed squarely on families who are not keeping track of their children's whereabouts. And we heard anecdotal evidence to support both these hypotheses. But the point is not to blame so much as it is to move ahead and do something together. The Task Force does not have a pat litany of answers in the face of this challenge, but the following recommendations are an attempt to capture our best preliminary thoughts.

RECOMMENDATION 6

6.1 That the public policy, and public services agenda, become alert to the critical and disturbing phenomenon of the large numbers of school-age children who are not attending school.

6.2 That a serious and concerted effort be made to improve the tracking of children and youth in the province, regardless of school jurisdiction; that resources be allocated to support such a tracking system; and that the various school jurisdictions in the province be urged to cooperate, including those that are publically funded, as well as on-Reserve school jurisdictions.

6.3 That an interagency strategy be devised to intervene in this matter, and that substantial public funds be allocated to its support.

The whole of our society, including every human-service agency, has a vested interest in this issue, and the assistance and cooperation of all will be required if amelioration on any significant scale is to be achieved.

7. The Interagency Imperative

Long established 'boundaries' are being challenged everywhere - whether geographical boundaries, such as those of provinces or nations, or organizational boundaries between departments and other service areas. Just as new modes of travel and communication impact geographical boundaries, so do travel, communication patterns and *fundamental changes in needs* impact the delivery of the human services. The province's demographic landscape shows the conspicuous impact of increased mobility, and new modes of transportation and communication. These, coupled with other quite fundamental forces of social changes, such as family structure, increased poverty, work patterns and demographic shifts of peoples and cultures, are seriously challenging the boundaries of the human services today.

The strict boundary delimitations between agencies, like Social Services, Health, Justice and Education, increasingly begin to look as if they have become barriers to service delivery, rather than facilitators of it. It is not that there isn't a place for the integrity of these services and their mission, but it has become all too apparent that the boundaries between them need to be renegotiated so as to permit better interface, and to facilitate more effective and more efficient service. Too much overlap between different agency regions, and too many disconnects between agencies themselves, are apparent from the outside, each case documented by its anecdotal evidence. Mobility, communication, and declining resources hitched to compelling human service mean the issue is no longer avoidable, if it ever was.

In fact Saskatchewan has already taken some positive steps: 10 Regional Intersectoral Committees (RICs) have been established throughout the province, which bring together a wide range of people and agencies associated with the human services. Typically, each has a coordinator, although the actual mechanism for hiring and supporting this individual tends to vary according to the kind of arrangement the agencies have been able to determine at the local level. Between schools divisions themselves, various kinds of sharing arrangements have been promoted. Shared Services permits multiple school divisions to share in the provision of special support services for children (such an educational psychologist who specializes in testing), which would not be economical for any one of them to support on their own. The Department of Education has promoted its Interagency School-Linked Services (ISLS) concept, whereby agencies outside of education are encouraged to deliver their services linked to local schools, and occasionally actually in the school (school-based). School divisions also typically sit on the local RIC, usually the director, or a superintendent (often one assigned the Special Education portfolio).

Finally, at the provincial level of government a forum of senior staff from all of the human service departments has been created (originally known as the 'ADM's Forum,' it is now called the Human Services Integration Forum [HSIF]). This group meets on a monthly basis, and pursues an agenda of service integration and cooperation amongst its members. The Forum has hired a director to facilitate and support its work.

Overall, therefore, the province has not stood still on this issue, and taken together these initiatives show the province to be a serious player in the reform of government movement that is apparent elsewhere on our continent, and abroad.

As notable as these efforts are, and as important as their contributions have been, however, the Task Force gained the distinct impression that the service integration agenda, given its current structure and resources, has reached a kind of impasse, and that further progress, if it is to be made at all, will require a 'paradigm shift' in terms of both strategy and resources. Put very simply, with the RICs for example, we now have people sitting around a table, actually meeting and talking to each other in a way that had never happened before. At the same time, the members are all still very conscious that they represent discrete entities, with particular mandates, missions and protocols. For the most part, they also often see themselves as representing different professions.

Although good initiatives have been forthcoming, especially in some areas, there is still considerable sensitivity about areas of responsibility and authority ('turf'), and caution about what might be seen as encroachment. The Committees certainly serve as vehicles for communication, but truly 'inte-grated' projects are more difficult to achieve, and it may not even be clear what they would look like. There is not usually a sense at the RIC level that participants have a green light from senior staff to move ahead on integrated local projects, and in most cases, any suggestions that did emerge would require the approval of more senior officials before they could be implemented.

The progress of the interagency agenda, therefore, appears to be proceeding at a very measured pace, and some evidence of frustration is beginning to surface. It could be argued, in fact, that having reached the point of maximum development, and the limits of its largely voluntary organizational design, the process has stalled. The process has, in fact, hit what the Task Force has dubbed the 'cooperation barrier.' Occasionally we heard from senior educators quite pointed remarks such as "Don't underestimate our frustration - we're sick and tired of meeting for lunch every month and calling it cooperation!" Almost without exception we heard that the outcomes were not commensurate with the investments of time and energy. Sometimes we heard comments like "Even if we get them to the table, they [the other agencies] don't seem to have any discretionary money! If you could get them to bring some money to the table, maybe we could get somewhere. All we hear is that they can't afford [it]."

And it must be admitted that, although there are project monies specifically targeted for the RICs to adjudicate, and although some cooperation has been achieved through their creation, over and above serving as a forum for communication, there is not a great deal of what could be termed real 'collaboration' taking place. The RICs have made an excellent start; what is needed now is *the impetus of resources and mandate* to propel the current structures into new levels of collaboration.

Beyond a fresh impetus, however, we also believe that interagency efforts need a clearer sense of locus for human service delivery for children and youth. In our view this rationalization and integration of their services to children needs to be done through schools. Typically, schools are the first line of service to children, and as needs arise they are usually manifested first in the school, and to the school staff. Especially where the school population includes a significant proportion of high risk children, it makes sense for more services to be delivered in and through the school, including services to parents and other community members. The notion of 'full-service schools' and school systems, embraces the idea of services to children being at least school-linked, and in some cases even school-based.

This New School, or 'School^{PLUS},' is a centre for community development and family support that includes educational programs for children and youth, as well as adult education opportunities relating to health and wellness, nutrition, prenatal and parenting courses, anger management and addiction programs, career-education opportunities and technology programs and workshops.

Obviously the organizational and instructional burden for a New School cannot fall simply on schools as they are currently staffed and funded - the School^{PLUS} is definitely an interagency creation that requires true collaboration and the *human and financial support* of multiple agencies. Significant strides in this sort of direction have already been taken on the strength of unique leadership within some of the community schools, and in some of the distinctive high schools, like Nutana. What is needed now is both the 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' support necessary to promote these programs and models more extensively throughout the province.

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It needs to be acknowledged, however, that a new kind of leadership is required for these initiatives and reforms to be successful: qualities conducive to 'power-sharing,' as well as philosophies of 'empowerment,' 'building on strengths' and 'asking the client' will definitely be needed. The essential philosophy of Integrated School-Linked Services is sound; what is required now is a major human-service reform that will create the impetus and release the resources necessary to ensure that such schools can flourish.

The Task Force has pondered long and hard over the interagency issue; we have met with interested people throughout the province; we have probed, questioned and dialogued; we have heard from experts familiar with such reforms in other parts of Canada and elsewhere in the world. We recognize that there is no magic bullet, and that progress will come slowly, but at the end of the day we believe passionately that a serious effort to bring greater integration to human-service delivery makes sense, and will ensure better services to the children and youth of our province.

In order for a higher level of integration to be achieved, however, several key elements need to be recognized:

(a) The *support of 'Senior Government,'* both elected and in the ministries, is essential; there must be a strong sense in the departments that the interagency agenda has been sanctioned, and is supported, at the most senior levels of government.

(b) The support must be accompanied by a *serious commitment of resources*. Although interagency cooperation will achieve efficiencies, the reform itself cannot happen without the injection of 'kick start' monies (we prefer to call it 'catalytic funding,' because we are convinced that the presence of this funding will achieve results out of all proportion to its size).

(c) There is no one design that can be applied simplistically throughout the province, and for the strategy to achieve success considerable room for *local determination* and innovation must be preserved.

Nevertheless, given the critical needs and significant population of at risk children, youth and families in the province, and given the other forces for change everywhere apparent, we believe that reform in this direction is visionary, prudent and urgent!

RECOMMENDATION 7

7.1 That Cabinet endorse a major integrated services initiative for its departments, and charge its public servants with responsibility for designing an 'Integrated Services Action Plan' to effect this major reform in the delivery of human services in the province.

7.2 That the Action Plan include a serious commitment of resources, human and financial, to this initiative.

7.3 That the Action Plan incorporate significant enhancement of school-linked and school-based services to children, families and youth.

7.4 That all departments be charged with responsibility, and given resources, to create budget lines for integrated service initiatives, and that the deputy ministers, in consultation with their departmental officials, be responsible for creating criteria, and a strategy for selecting the most meritorious integrated service projects for support.

7.5 That in the implementation design for this initiative, Government avoid as much as possible short-term, microfund envelopes. The inputs for these strategies always vastly exceeds the outcomes, and are calculated to promote frustration and cynicism. The funding needs to be in the form of substantial envelopes (baskets!); it needs to be at least medium to long term in design (e.g., five-year cycles); and it must be targeted only to projects in which significant partnership with another agency(ies) is evident, and where at least one of those partners is a school or school division.

7.6 That specific targets be established in the human service departments of government for the assignment of staff to integrated school-linked or school-based services within given terms, e.g., that within, say 3 years, all human service departments will have a specific percentage of their human resources (or a targeted number of person-years) assigned to the support of integrated school-linked and school-based services. Further, that proposals for these targets be reported to, and vetted by, the Human Services Integration Forum.

7.7 That Cabinet create a superordinate ministry (Office of Human Service Integration): reporting directly to the Premier, the Office will have responsibility and authority to monitor, promote and give leadership to this initiative, as well as serving a kind of 'ombudsman' role within government to adjudicate issues and differences which may emerge between one or more departments with respect to an interagency initiative(s).

Doubtless a reform of this magnitude will occasion some growing pains, but we are convinced that they will be more than amply rewarded by increased support for, and services to, children, youth and families. And although the metaphor is a little worn, the notion of the turbulence created by paradigm shifts can illustrate how disequilibrium can sometimes be a prelude to, and a necessary condition of, a major step forward. The failure of the Swiss watch industry initially to seize upon new digital technology (it did not fit their existing manufacturing paradigm, and adoption of it would have precipitated turbulence), even though they were the first manufacturers to be informed of the new technology's potential contribution to watch making, resulted in near disaster for the Swiss watch industry, and a

painfully delayed market entry. What we have before us is something of much greater value than a watch industry or any other technological advance; we have the future creators of all innovation - the lives of children and youth in our province. Lying before us is a significant opportunity to enhance, rationalize and integrate services to these children and youth, to ensure that the province will be a community of hope for their future.

Other Issues, Concerns and Recommendations

What follows are reflections and a set of recommendations that address a variety of issues and concerns: some relate to general themes already identified, but are judged to be of sufficiently discrete interest to merit separate attention; others are matters of considerable importance, but they do not appear to fall under any of the major headings invoked thus far. These items will be handled in a briefer manner than the major themes we have already covered; they should not, however, be deemed to be of lesser importance, and we anticipate developing their background and rationale more fully in our final report. We table them here for the purpose of inviting dialogue and response.

8. Technology

One of the newer roles of the school relates to technology, specifically computer education and application, as well as other new media. Schools have always, of course, participated in technologies, especially those which related to communication: slates gave way to black boards, and straight pens and nibs gave way to the ballpoint pen; paper and pencil calculations were enhanced (sometimes) by slide rules, and later by hand-held calculators; ink and gum duplication gave way to the gestetner machine, which in turn has yielded to the xerox copier; paper pictures have been enhanced by projection technologies, slides, the film strip projector, films and now the video; radio broadcasts (e.g., of kindergarten, and Shakespearean plays) have yielded to television; distance education by print has in some cases been enhanced by closed-circuit, two-way electronic course delivery. All of these developments have had a significant impact upon schools and instruction. True, the early claims for some have not been borne out in practice: the television has not made the classroom teacher obsolete, contrary to the expectations of some futurists. Nevertheless, technologies cannot be ignored.

The evolutionary development of these communication technologies should not, however, lull us into thinking that the current introduction of computer-based technologies is 'just another' technology. Both the enormous power represented by the computer, and now the Internet, and the cost of this technology, put it in a league by itself. Not only is this technology of significance for communication and information-gathering for schools, but as we all now know, it has become the backbone of a so-called knowledge economy: inclusion of technology in schools, therefore, is not optional, it is of the very essence!

During our consultations it became quite apparent to the Task Force that these technologies represent an imperative for schools: students believe they are essential,

parents are adamant and, despite the costs, trustees are bound to approve the necessary human and other resources (including, of course, the significant capital costs). Nevertheless, trustees are apprehensive about the unlimited resources that technology programs seem capable of consuming. Comments like, "This stuff is a black hole - there is no end to the amount of money we could sink into it!" were not exceptional. And let there be no doubt, very large sums of money are being expended on these technologies, because we are not talking only about the capital cost of computer purchase, networks and software. Instruction and technician support must all be factored in. Suffice it to say that technology represents a very major new role for the school to play, and we are into it for the long term.

Sometimes concerns were expressed about the fact that the Department of Education was not providing enough leadership in this area, and that it had more or less left school divisions to their own devices. Some commentators wondered, for example, if the Department might not have supported schools through centralized purchasing, and so capture for the divisions the benefits of economies of scale. Technological support too, would be welcomed. But at the end of the day it needs to be recognized that Departmental help might not have been universally welcomed, and would in any case have been subject to enormous differences of opinion. In fact, as we know, the whole area of technology cultivates almost a maverick edge that defies central control and development. Wars over the preferred system (PC or Apple?) would have ensued, as well as over preferred hardware and network systems. Still, there are pockets of belief in the province where the Department's nonaction in this area is perceived as culpable.

At the cost end, however, it is the Task Force's impression that the expense for school divisions is significant, and that it has been incremental. A school division with an enrolment of just over 2,500 students might be expected to spend in the order of $750,000 to support its technology program. It must be recognized that this expenditure is incremental - it is *over and above* all of the other costs that are incurred independently of technology, and unlike the private sector, no rationalization in the form of 'efficiency' or 'improved customer service' can be invoked to rationalize this expenditure. It is the strong impression of the Task Force that in addition to the stringent economies of the 1990s, which saw school division budgets held to very tight margins, the additional burden to schools of technology has been insufficiently recognized, nor has the impact of these costs on other programs been fully recognized. Consider the three quarters of a million dollars just mentioned, and divide it by 30,000 (approximately a beginning teacher's salary), and we find that it represents 25 teacher positions, no small impact on the human resources available to a school division! True, a technology fund has been created (as a line item) in the grant formula, but at $2M for the entire province it is well below the actual costs being borne by school divisions.

Nevertheless the Task Force does see the new technology as an important and promising resource: not only does it represent an important area for student learning, it also shows potential for helping to create a more level playing field between rural and urban school systems. Rural teachers noted the distinct improvement in the information content of student essays since the advent of Internet search (we presume not because the essay itself

was purchased!). In the past, of course, research resources for rural students were considerably fewer than for their urban counterparts. Even with technology, however, a gap continues to exist, but some concrete steps could help narrow it.

RECOMMENDATION 8

8.1 That Government recognize that technology, and technology education, are an imperative for the province's full participation in the information society, and the economies of the 21st century; that they recognize the substantial incremental costs it poses for school divisions; and that the school grant formula be enhanced to recognize these costs in something much closer to actual expenditure than currently appears to be the case.

8.2 That Government, through the cooperation of its crown corporations (especially SaskTel), pursue with all speed and urgency a program that ensures high-speed connectivity for all schools in the province; and further, that it do so on the basis of no incremental costs to school divisions.

9. Distance Education

Distance learning seems to have gone full circle. In the good old days of the 30s and 40s, the use of correspondence school education played a significant role in the education of rural students, creating a 'stay at home' option for some, or at least as a supplement to the limited offerings of the small rural (one room) school. Although the advent of larger school units meant less reliance on the correspondence school, now with rural depopulation, correspondence and other modes of distance education are once again becoming important supplements to the limited course offerings available to rural high school students: French, Calculus and Law were the subjects most frequently mentioned by students to the Task Force.

The Correspondence School in the province certainly has a noble tradition and does a fine job within the constraints of its limited resources. It is our impression, however, that in the current climate, and with current technologies, significant enhancement of distance education capacity is called for, partly by enhancing the capacities of the Correspondence School, and partly through direct support offered to rural divisions to facilitate the creation of networked, interactive, offerings between small community-based high schools. Students clearly found 'print-based' formats the least desirable (as carefully designed as they are), and preferred technology-enhanced modes of delivery. Interactive models, and one-way distance supplemented by on-site tutors, seemed preferable to students. The notion of the 'community of learners,' and the difficulties of being 'all alone' in the learning task, were very conspicuous amongst respondents.

RECOMMENDATION 9

That the Department of Education consider how its distance education programs (the Correspondence School) might be enhanced, especially in the use of new technology, and/or, how rural school divisions might be supported directly to promote effective two-way distance delivery of courses to rural high school students where specialized courses are unavailable.

10. Career Education

The Task Force found that career education was a real concern, and that there was a strong consensus that it be seen as included in the 'role of the school.' Although the inclusion of career education in Life Transition courses at the high school level has been a positive step, the jury is still out on their effectiveness. The problem seems to be that, for the most part, career education is not like other, primarily cognitive courses. The textbook-based model of learning is inappropriate for career education. Career education, to be effective and credible, must include the voice of lived experience in the field; it also requires an experiential mode of learning that calls for some time spent outside of the classroom, in the laboratory of life and work. To be fair, although teachers can do wonders, they usually do not - nor should they be expected to - possess a dynamic understanding of entrepreneurship, or welding, or carpentry, or what it is really like to be an electrician or a veterinarian.

The Task Force's thinking and research on this topic is not complete, however, we do want to table career education for serious consideration as one of the critical and emerging 'roles of the school.' We also seek further feedback and reaction from the stakeholders and other interested parties. At the same time, we recognize that career education does differ from more discrete subject-oriented, and cognitively based, high school courses, and will require quite a different pedagogical approach and supports if it is to be successfully implemented. Moreover, attending a career fair, although useful enough in itself, does not impress students as a substitute for real career education!

RECOMMENDATION 10

That career education be fully recognized as a significant area of learning for contemporary students, and that it be acknowledged as necessitating a quite different pedagogical approach from typical 'subject-based' courses. Further, we urge the Department of Education to provide support for the "best practices" in this area that are emerging in the province, that they receive funding as pilot projects, and that subsequently efforts be made to promote these practices wherever possible and feasible elsewhere in the province, recognizing that some extraordinary efforts will be required to make such opportunities available to Northern and rural students.

11. The Boundary Problem

Although some boundaries have succumbed to the pressures of modern communication and travel, others, like school division boundaries, and the boundaries employed by the various government departments in terms of organizing service delivery, are still very much in place and operative. The Task Force did not go out of its way to explore boundary issues, and we tended to encounter such problems only when they were urged upon us. We tended to avoid the issue of 'amalgamation,' since it was not directly identified in our Terms of Reference, and also because we knew that it was so very highly contentious.

Nevertheless, try as we might, we could not avoid boundary issues entirely. They entered into our consultations and deliberations in the form of lament, on the part of school division administrators, about the difficulties they encounter relating to multiple regions of 'other agencies,' like Social Services or Health. It is not uncommon for the jurisdiction of a single school division to overlap with several health districts or social services regions. At least one school division overlaps with three health districts! Differences of practice between the multiple offices of these agencies, such as the services they are prepared to support, and differing interpretations of protocol between these districts and regions, and high staff turn-over, are a recipe for frustration from the viewpoint of many rural divisions.

Although anecdotes illustrating these problems could be recited, it is less than clear that all of the blame belongs with the other agencies. In one respect at least they have exceeded school divisions on the reorganizational front: several of the departments have successfully undergone service rationalization, while Education's achievements in this area are very modest indeed: the fact is that there are 6 social service regions (and 29 regional services centres), 32 health districts, and 100 school divisions! Secondly, there is another aspect of the boundary problem which relates not so much to the number of jurisdictional units as it does to the fact that, whatever their number, if they are not congruent then problems will persist. Obviously, the creation of coterminous boundaries for human service agencies makes the most sense from an administrative point of view. On this model, quite apart from the absolute number of jurisdictional units in any department or the number of school divisions, if the boundaries that did exist were coterminous in essential respects, many interagency relations would be considerably facilitated.

The creation of coterminous boundaries could, of course, be much improved through school division amalgamations, but the issue of amalgamation is really a separate issue.

A second alternative, less radical than coterminous boundaries, but which the Task Force believes may possess some potential for ameliorating the current confusion, and which we submit for consideration here, is the notion of *single-jurisdiction networks* for school divisions relative to each of the other agencies. So, for example, where a school division overlaps with two health districts (A and B), an agreement could be struck such that all school-linked health services be provided by only *one* of the health districts (A); the same

logic could apply to social service regions. Although it entails some administrative juggling, the single-jurisdiction model promises much smoother and more effective service for children, without the upheaval of complete administrative unit reform that would be entailed by other options, such as the county system. Obviously, the single-jurisdiction approach still lays most of the burden for adjustment on the other agencies, but given their success at restructuring perhaps going this extra mile will not prove too onerous.

RECOMMENDATION 11

11.1 That the Department of Education be empowered to provide leadership, beyond its current mandate, to address the administrative dysfunction created by the absence of coterminous boundary characteristics between school divisions and the other human service agencies, especially health and social services. Further, where adjustments in school division boundaries are urgently indicated, that such options not be entirely ignored.

11.2 That the feasibility of the administrative reform described as the 'single- jurisdiction model' for school division relations with the other agencies be explored.

11.3 Without prejudice to what the solution(s) ought to be, that the Government add the voice of this Task Force to the voices of those who have identified the administrative jungle of our human services delivery in this province as dysfunctional and outdated. Moreover, let it be known that none of us on the Task Force highlighted this issue at the outset of our work as being of high priority; we have, however, been compelled to do so by the evidence.

12. The New School and Physical Plant

We have already spoken of the need to see the role of schools in a new way. We have called this approach the New School, or sometimes we have referred to our vision as 'School^{PLUS},' to capture the idea that their mandates and mission includes what schools have traditionally been mandated to do, *and more*. One of the areas that will require significant attention is that of physical plant. Additional space and modifications of existing space will be required. If the mandate for the school is to be augmented, then so must be the resources, and that includes the physical plant. The Task Force does not see its mandate to include cost accounting of this particular item, however, we would be remiss in not drawing government's attention to it. School-linked and school-based interagency services require renovations of, and additions to, existing facilities, as well as revised specifications for new 'school' (read also: New School) construction, in order to facilitate the new interagency mandate.

RECOMMENDATION 12

That Government commission a body to examine the implications for school facilities of the New School initiative. Necessarily, the funding for such an initiative will reflect its interagency character; this initiative should not be seen as just another school facility issue, like school gymnasia for example, to be handled by the Department of Education alone.

13. Character Education

Although, it is not the Task Force's intention to comment extensively on this aspect of the 'role of the school' in this *Interim Report*, we certainly heard support from many participants in our consultations for the importance of the school in character formation. Most often such comments came hard upon the heels of comments about the need for children to display appropriate respect for others, and for fundamental values like honesty, and industry. Usually such comments were framed in terms of the need for children to develop 'social skills,' and the fact that schools have an important role in this regard. The issue of religion was also raised, but usually in the language of the importance of 'spirituality.' Certainly given the element of controversy that sometimes is attached to this area of education, there is no evidence that any sector of the public is prepared to counsel a strategy of retreat. Great concern was expressed about the entertainment media, and respondents often expressed hope that schools might prove something of an antidote to the violence and greed so apparent therein.

The interest in character education represents something of a revival, compared to recent decades. Certainly there was a time when schools were very forthright in the promotion and maintenance of values. During the sixties and early seventies, however, the values curriculum went into decline, for several reasons: in part out of deference to scientific 'objectivity'; doubtless it also reflected what was going on in America vis a vis school prayer, and the separation of church and state doctrine; and it is possible that pressures of ethical relativism, asking the question, "Whose values should we teach?", came into play as well. After travelling down this road some distance, however, the public has come to feel considerable discomfort with this diluted approach to values, and in some cases parents have begun to vote with their feet, by creating so-called 'charter schools,' by taking up home schooling, or by choosing the Catholic system.

For the most part Saskatchewan has avoided many of the sorts of extremes that have surfaced in other jurisdictions (vouchers, charter schools, etc.). But we have done so by not following the most categorical and strident voices; we have done so by adopting an inclusive agenda that invites all voices into the conversation, to create solutions that focus on 'core values' and 'shared values.' We have also wisely avoided the extreme version of the separation between church and state. It is not possible for schools and classrooms to be totally 'neutral' (e.g., "secular" is not neutral) when it comes to religious beliefs. What we can do is try to promote understanding and respect. It is worth noting that the

province's Core Curriculum includes character development in several areas, but especially in the Common Essential Learning, "Personal and Social Values and Skills."

RECOMMENDATION 13

That Government recognize the importance the public attaches to character development in schools, including social skills, values and spirituality - a society without these is unthinkable. Further, the Task Force urges Government to recognize that character development entails respect and tolerance of all peoples and cultures, even where there exist *fundamental differences between them.* Finally, that Government take steps to ensure that appropriate financial and other structures exist to support curriculum and practice to promote character development.

14. Budget Implications

At this stage of its deliberations the Task Force has not closely cost-accounted the budget implications of its various recommendations; however, an attempt has been made in what follows to provide what should be seen as 'guesstimates' of such costs. We considered the possibility of avoiding cost estimates altogether, since any egregious errors we make will become flashpoints of distraction from the rest of our work. On the other hand, we had to weigh seriously the possibility that, by leaving budget estimates out of our report altogether, we may unjustifiably signal that the costs associated with these recommendations are unimportant and insignificant. **Thus, in the page that follows, we offer preliminary estimates as 'ball park' figures, both to help identify the items and projects that will need financial support, and also to suggest the sort of magnitude of expenditure that will in all likelihood be required.**

The magnitude of the expenditures identified below is sufficiently high to represent a serious response to the challenges and concerns identified in the *Report.* In the mind of the Task Force these estimates are not at all exorbitant given the gravity of the issues we are confronting. They represent a positive and proactive investment in the lives of children, youth and their families, and they are far preferable to the heavy social costs that are bound to accompany the failure to act now. The casualties created by the failure to act will, almost certainly, call for interventions in future that are many times more expensive than any measures we have proposed here.

RECOMMENDATION 14: Budgetary Implications

Project	1st Year Cost	Next 3 Years Cost
1. Community School (promotion)	$ 150,000	$ 900,000
2. Community School (grant enhancement - elementary)	500,000	6,000,000
3. Early Intervention	300,000	6,600,000
4. High School Reform		
- promotion (included in 1.)	N/A	
- grant enhancement	100,000	9,000,000
5. Hidden Youth	300,000	3,000,000
6. Interagency		
- Education	300,000	500,000
- Social Services	300,000	1,000,000
- Health	300,000	2,000,000
- Justice	300,000	1,000,000
- new $	500,000	12,000,000
7. Technology		
- enhanced grant (from 2M)	4,000,000	12,000,000
8. Career Education	100,000	450,000
9. Boundary Research & Advocacy	150,000	450,000
10. Physical Plant		
- operations (research)	100,000	600,000
- capital	?	?
11. Character Education		
- Department of Education (capacity)	100,000	300,000
- support to schools	50,000	300,000
TOTAL	$7,550,000	
TOTAL (3 years)		$55,600,000
TOTAL (per annum)		*$18,533,333*

15. So What is the 'Role of the School'?

Having gotten this far, readers may still be wondering to themselves - yes, this is all very good, but you haven't really answered the question: what is the 'role of the school'? What is *the* mission of 'schools'? In the ideas contained in this *Report*, are you not distracting schools as we have known them away from their historic mission, which is to teach?

Part of the trouble with posing the question this way (i.e., asking, "What is the school?"), is that is seems to make the assumption that somewhere behind the word *school* there is lurking a *meaning phantom*, and if only we could think clearly enough, or if only we debate long enough, the outline of this phantom would become clear to us. In fact the mission of the school is a social creation, and schools have been established over the years for a variety of purposes, to meet the varying needs of children and society. Schools have not been attempts to achieve the ideals of a timeless essence hidden behind the word *school*.

Instead, the Task Force suggests that we look at another, more fundamental question, namely, *what are the needs of children and youth*? Especially, what are the needs of the *whole child*? Education and learning are vital needs, as are food, clothing, health, security, affection and recreation. Given the profound changes our society is undergoing, particularly the alarming increase in the numbers of 'at risk' children and youth, we suggest that the time has come once again to put the needs of children at the centre of the school question.

So as useful as the 'role of the school' has been as a banner for the work of the Task Force, the real issue is the needs of children. Looked at this way, we can see that to a considerable extent schools in our province have already begun to evolve; the process of significant metamorphosis is already well underway. **What we are suggesting is that we make the evolution official, provide it with much enhanced resources, and link its service array to other agencies more strongly. We call this the New School, or School^{PLUS}.**

The New School, or School^{PLUS}, will of course carry on with the fundamental educative function that schools have always had, and certainly this key function must not be eroded or diluted in any way. But in addition to this educative function, we see programs that attempt to meet other basic needs of children and youth and their families based in the school, or at least linked to it. And we see the school as a centre of community development, and the hub of the proverbial 'village' it takes to raise a child.

We are adamant in our conviction, however, that this broader vision requires additional resources; it cannot be created on the backs of the already severely strained existing resources on which schools are attempting to manage. We have seen more than enough evidence of programs - good in themselves - being added incrementally to the role of the school without sufficient resources. We heard, for example, that the inclusive philosophy for Special Education was assigned to schools without adequate funds, with the result that

other programs have been bound to suffer. Technology too, represents an area where schools have been expected to 'add on' without the infusion of corresponding resources. **Schools absolutely cannot handle one more thing added to their role, given the current resource base. Any new duties must, therefore, be accompanied by the appropriate injection of incremental funding.**

Given the radical changes we have seen in the needs of children as they are presented to schools - the demographic changes, changes in family profiles, poverty and high mobility rates, as well as the farming crisis and rural depopulation - we are convinced that the time has come *to do school differently* than we have in the past. We see more services to children rationalized around schools - school-linked and school-based. We see stronger links between school and community. And we see the time for a new kind of leadership - a leadership that tries to do justice to both equity and excellence; one that values the link between school and community, teachers and parents; one that shares power, rather than tries to protect it; one where the scope of in-school administrators is revised, enlarged, and enhanced; and one that does not view professionalism in a competitive manner.

Again, given the urgency of the needs of children and the radical changes that schools are already attempting to cope with, we do not believe this new vision is an option - **rather, it is an imperative**. We will either step into this new era intentionally, and with appropriate resources, or we will stumble into it, flounder and become overwhelmed. It is not too much to say that the province's future hangs in the balance - and we say the time has come to reorder public policy priorities so as to ensure that our future represents a community of hope for children and youth!

SUMMARY: RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

That all educational stakeholders recognize the complexity, and multiplicity of the role(s) assigned to schools today. So diverse and incompatible are these expectations that they verge on incoherence. The first step is to recognize that a major effort of mission clarification is called for, and that under the circumstances, no single - and certainly no simple! - solution will be forthcoming.

RECOMMENDATION 2

That schools, and schooling, be viewed by educational policy makers and stakeholders as constructions of a society which, at the same time, they reflect. If schools need to be reformed, there is a strong likelihood that attention will also have to be given to other aspects of society and social policy.

RECOMMENDATION 3

That the philosophy of community schools be adopted for all schools in Saskatchewan, and that special measures be created to promote and support this initiative at the level of the Department; these should include but not be limited to:

3.1 The identification of a number of schools in the province as 'model community/alternate schools' (on the basis of "best practices"), and the allocation of a special fund to:

(a) support these schools in such a way as to permit them to become resource schools for other educators throughout the province, and,

(b) permit the visits of educators from elsewhere in the province to these schools (i.e., to defray their travel costs), and to permit visits by resource persons from the model school to other interested schools.

3.2 A review of the funding formula supporting community schools, so as to permit universal application of the program, more flexibility at the local level, and the elimination of what appear to be unjustified differentials in funding, such as between northern and southern schools, and between schools that were created in the initial group of schools, and those which qualified later.

By "universal application" the Task Force does not intend a mechanical application of the current community school funding formula to all schools. As desirable as such a measure might be, it is financially unrealistic and probably unnecessary. What we are committed to is the universal implementation of the community school *philosophy* in all schools (not all of which has funding implications per se), and *a significant increase in funding* to support a much greater implementation of its practices and programs.

3.3 Thus, we envisage a significant increase in the funding allotment provided by Government to the Department of Education to support this recommended community school enhancement initiative.

RECOMMENDATION 4

That early intervention and prekindergarten programming be significantly expanded. That where feasible it be included within a community school. And further, we urge that this initiative be undertaken as an interagency initiative, involving at least the Departments of Health, Social Services and Education, and that it typically include an adult education component that focuses on topics like parenting, disease, nutrition, the creation of rich learning environments, as well as prenatal seminars.

RECOMMENDATION 5

That serious consideration by all stakeholders be given to the issue of high school reform, and that educational leaders, supported by the Department of Education, take steps to promote greater diversity in the mode of program delivery amongst high schools in the province. Further, that this reform process include as essential elements: a community school philosophy, a more student-centred approach to learning, promotion of modified program delivery, and the involvement and participation of students themselves at every stage of the process.

RECOMMENDATION 6

6.1 That the public policy, and public services agenda, become alert to the critical and disturbing phenomenon of the large numbers of school-age children who are not attending school.

6.2 That a serious and concerted effort be made to improve the tracking of children and youth in the province, regardless of school jurisdiction; that resources be allocated to support such a tracking system; and that the various school jurisdictions in the province be urged to cooperate, including those that are publically funded, as well as on-Reserve school jurisdictions.

6.3 That an interagency strategy be devised to intervene in this matter, and that substantial public funds be allocated to its support.

RECOMMENDATION 7

7.1 That Cabinet endorse a major integrated services initiative for its departments, and charge its public servants with responsibility for designing an 'Integrated Services Action Plan' to effect this major reform in the delivery of human services in the province.

7.2 That the Action Plan include a serious commitment of resources, human and financial, to this initiative.

7.3 That the Action Plan incorporate significant enhancement of school-linked and school-based services to children, families and youth.

7.4 That all departments be charged with responsibility, and given resources, to create budget lines for integrated service initiatives, and that the deputy ministers, in consultation with their departmental officials, be responsible for creating criteria, and a strategy, for selecting the most meritorious integrated service projects for support.

7.5 That in the implementation design for this initiative, Government avoid as much as possible short-term, microfund envelopes. The inputs for these strategies always vastly exceeds the outcomes, and are calculated to promote frustration and cynicism. The funding needs to be in the form of substantial envelopes (baskets!); it needs to be at least medium to long term in design (e.g., five-year cycles); and it must be targeted only to projects in which significant partnership with another agency(ies) is evident, and where at least one of those partners is a school or school division.

7.6 That specific targets be established in the human service departments of government for the assignment of staff to integrated school-linked or school-based services within given terms, e.g., that within, say 3 years, all human service departments will have a specific percentage of their human resources (or a targeted number of person-years) assigned to the support of integrated school-linked and school-based services. Further, that proposals for these targets be reported to, and vetted by, the Human Services Integration Forum.

7.7 That Cabinet create a superordinate ministry (Office of Human Service Integration): reporting directly to the Premier, the Office will have responsibility and authority to monitor, promote and give leadership to this initiative, as well as serving a kind of 'ombudsman' role within government to adjudicate issues and differences which may emerge between one or more departments with respect to an interagency initiative(s).

RECOMMENDATION 8

8.1 That Government recognize that technology, and technology education, are an imperative for the province's full participation in the information society, and the economies of the 21st century; that they recognize the substantial incremental costs it poses for school divisions; and that the school grant formula be enhanced to recognize these costs in something much closer to actual expenditure than currently appears to be the case.

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11.2 That the feasibility of the administrative reform described as the 'single-jurisdiction model' for school division relations with the other agencies be explored.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

List of Data-Collection and Information-Gathering Activities

1. ***Focus Groups: Direct Community Consultation***
   - Directors and Superintendents of Education
   - Principals and Vice-Principals
   - Teachers
   - Students
   - Parents
   - School Board Members
   - Community Schools
   - Community Groups (business organizations, police services, Aboriginal groups, children and youth service organizations, etc.)
   - Inter-agency officials (Education, Social Services, Health, Justice, etc.)
   - Site visits to special educational initiatives in a community ("best practices")

   This consultation will encompass over 25 communities (rural, urban, and northern, and include over 40 different school divisions). (Appendix 4)

2. ***May Hearings: Special invitations*** **sent to and** ***presentations*** **received from**
   - *all school divisions,* offering several option formats for presentation/input.
   - *the universities* and *Aboriginal teacher education programs.*
   - *other agencies and community groups.* (Appendix 6)

3. ***Other meetings, either invited or requested:*** **agencies and groups** – for example, the education partners (STF, SSTA, LEADS, SASK ED, SASC, Child Action Plan, the Historic High Schools Association, etc.). (Appendix 4)

4. ***Expert papers*** (by invitation; on selected special topics). (Appendix 5)

5. ***General submissions*** directly to the Task Force. (Appendix 5)

6. ***Literature search*** on special topics relevant to the role of the school. (Appendix 7)

7. ***General advertisements*** in urban news media, inviting submissions/hearings from the 'public at large.'

8. ***Web site*** <www.roleoftheschool.com> to publicize activity of the Task Force and to invite individual views and opinions.

9. ***Social Studies Unit Plan of Study*** to distribute to all schools to provide student input.

10. ***Provincial Stakeholder Symposium*** to provide opportunity for major education partners and stakeholders to form consensus around Task Force recommendations.

APPENDIX 2

Table 1: Focus Groups

Total Number of Responses, Focus Groups, and Submissions

Group	Responses (approximate)	Focus Groups	Submissions[a]
Teachers	<314	39	7
Parents and Trustees	<291	45	7
Community Service Workers	<153	36	33
Administrators	<356	66	5
Aboriginal Community Workers	<35	7	-
Students	<449	51	4
Community School Workers	<108	16	4
Business	>30	9	1
GRAND TOTAL	**1736**	**269**	**61**

[a]Through Focus Group Process.

APPENDIX 3

Table 2: May Hearings

Total Number of Submissions and/or Presentations

Organization	Submissions[a]	Presentations[b]
Postsecondary Institutions	5	4
Provincial Associations	2	2
School Divisions/Boards/Schools	34	12
GRAND TOTAL	**41**	**18**

[a]Through May Hearing Process. [b] At May Hearings

APPENDIX 4

List of Meetings Held

August 30-31, 1999
Saskatoon

- Panel: General Secretary, STF; President, LEADS; Executive Director, SSTA; Associate Deputy Minister, Saskatchewan Education
- Individual Parents
- Editor of *Generation X* (youth magazine)
- Saskatchewan Children's Advocate
- Deputy Minister and Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Social Services
- Saskatchewan Council on Children

September 20-21, 1999
Regina

- Director, Education and Research, Saskatchewan School Trustees Association
- Executive Director, Planning, Evaluation and Children's Services Branch, Saskatchewan Education

October 18-19, 1999
Yorkton

- Yorkton Public School Division No. 98;
  Yorkdale School Division No. 36;
  Yorkton Catholic School Division No. 86—
  The Task Force met with the following groups in each Division:
  - Directors of Education
  - In-School Administrators
  - Teachers
  - Students
  - Parents
  - School Board Members
- Yorkton Tribal Council
- Eastern Assiniboine Training & Employment Group
- Yorkton Friendship Centre
- Youth Outreach Group
- Child Action Plan Committee
- Department of Social Services, Yorkton Region
- East Central Health District
- Physical and Occupational Therapists, East Central Health District
- Indoor Air Quality Consultant
- RCMP Detachment Staff Sergeant
- Individual Citizen

- Clinical Psychologist
- Hon. Clay Serby, former Minister of Education

October 26-27, 1999
Nipawin
- Principals
- Students
- Teachers
- Parents
- School Board Members
- Health District & Social Services

Cumberland House
- Superintendent
- In-School Administrators
- Students
- Teachers
- Parents
- Local School Board Members
- Inter-Agency Group

November 3-4, 1999
La Ronge
- Superintendent
- Principals
- Students
- Teachers
- Parents
- Local School Board Members
- Inter-Agency Group

Pinehouse Lake
- Superintendent
- Principal
- Students
- Teachers
- Parents
- Local School Board Members
- Inter-Agency Group

November 8-9, 1999
Meadow Lake
- Lakeview Elementary School Tour
- Director of Education
- Students

- Principals
- Teachers
- School Board plus Local Board Members
- Inter-Agency Group

Ile a la Crosse

- Students (Life Transitions, Information Processing combined class)
- Students (Adult Basic Education)
- Friendship Centre
- School Administrators
- Teachers
- Director of Education
- School Board Members
- Parents
- Inter-Agency Group (mayor, elders, Health District CEO)

November 23-24, 1999

Prince Albert

- Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division No. 119;
  Prince Albert Catholic School Division No. 6—
  The Task Force met with the following groups in each Division:
  - Directors of Education
  - In-School Administrators
  - Teachers
  - Students
  - Parents
  - School Board Members
- Margo Fournier Centre
- Social Services Regional Office
- Health District
- Won-ska Cultural School
- Aboriginal Women's Council of Saskatchewan
- Prince Albert Grand Council
- Community School Workers

November 24, 1999

Tisdale

- Tisdale School Division No. 53
  - Superannuated Teachers' Association
  - Tisdale Middle and Secondary School Students
  - Inter-Agency Group (Health District, Social Services Regional Office, Tisdale Ministerial Association, North East Early Childhood Intervention Program, R.C.M.P.)
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - School Division Focus Group

Debden

- Parkland School Division No. 64
  - Debden Golden Age Senior Citizens
  - Debden School Administrators
  - Students (SRC), Debden School
  - Parkland Teachers' Association
  - Shellbrook/Canwood Métis Association
  - Parkland Health Integrated Services Steering Committee
  - Parkland Boards of Education & Parents
  - Parkland Division Principals
  - Tribal Council Band School Administrators

Wakaw, Bruno, Cudworth, St. Louis

- Wakaw School Division No. 48

Bruno

- Principal
- Local Board of Education

Cudworth

- Students
- Teachers

St. Louis

- Principal
- Local Board of Education
- Teachers

Wakaw

- Board of Education
- Panel: Director, Principal, Vice Principal
- Students
- Teachers

December 15-16, 1999

Regina

- Expert Presentations by Faculty of Education, University of Regina:
  - Early Childhood Education—"Meeting & Supporting Diversity: Student Needs and Choices"
  - Educational Foundations—"The Place of Schooling: A Journey in Humanization"
  - Vocation/Technical Education—"Youth Unemployment & Skills Shortages"
- Historical High Schools Association
- Education Critic, Saskatchewan Party

January 25-26, 2000

Swift Current

- Swift Current School Division No. 94;
  Swift Current School Division No. 11;

Prairie West School Division No. 75;
Swift Current Comprehensive High School—
The Task Force met with the following groups in each Division:

- Directors of Education
- Division Office Administrators
- In-School Administrators
- Students
- Teachers
- Parents
- School Board Members

- Maverick High School
- Inter-Agency Group
  - Social Services
  - Health
  - Regional Intersectoral Committee
  - Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse
  - School Division Student Services
- Southwest Youth Transitions Partnerships
- South West Centre for Entrepreneurial Development Inc.
- Youth Canada Project
- R.C.M.P., City and Rural Detachments

January 26, 2000
Maple Creek

- Maple Creek School Division No. 17
  - Director of Education
  - Division Office Administrators
  - Principals
  - Teachers
  - Students
  - Parents
  - School Board Members
  - Inter-Agency Group
    * Health
    * Social Services
    * Chamber of Commerce
    * Police
    * Mayor

Eastend

- Eastend School Division No. 8
- Director of Education
- Principals
- Students

- Teachers
- Parents
- School Board Members
- Inter-Agency Group
- Chamber of Commerce
- Police
- Mayor
- Individuals

February 15-17, 2000
Saskatoon

- Saskatoon Public School Division No. 13;
  St. Paul's Catholic School Division No. 20;
  Saskatoon East School Division No. 41;
  Saskatoon West School Division No. 42—
  The Task Force met with the following groups in each Division:
  - Directors of Education
  - Division Office Administrators
  - In-School Administrators
  - Students
  - Teachers
  - Parents
  - School Board Members
- Community Groups at Large:
  - Saskatoon Catholic Community Schools Group
  - Saskatoon Public Community Schools Group
  - Joe Duquette School
  - Farm School
  - Nutana Collegiate
  - Holy Cross Collegiate
  - Saskatoon Police Service
  - Regional Intersectoral Committee
  - Indian and Métis Friendship Centre
  - Saskatoon Communities for Children
  - Political Action Group on Poverty
  - Concerned Individuals

February 17, 2000
Lloydminster

- Lloydminster Public School Division No. 99;
  Lloydminister Catholic School Division No. 89—
  The Task Force met with the following groups in each Division:
  - Directors of Education

- Division Office Administrators
- In-School Administrators
- Students
- Teachers
- Parents
- School Board Members
- Integrated School-Linked Services Committee

February 17, 2000
Maidstone

- Battle River School Division No. 60 (Lloydminster-based Division)
  - Director of Education
  - Division Office Administrators
  - In-School Administrators
  - Students
  - Teachers
  - Parents
  - School Board Members

February 17, 2000
Watrous

- Saskatchewan Central School Division No. 121
  - Director of Education
  - Division Office Administrators
  - In-School Administrators
  - Students
  - Teachers
  - Parents
  - School Board Members

March 21-22, 2000
Regina

- Regina Public School Division No. 4;
  Regina Catholic School Division No. 81—
  The Task Force met with the following groups in each Division:
  - Directors of Education
  - Division Office Administrators
  - In-School Administrators
  - Students
  - Teachers
  - Parents
  - School Board Members
- Ranch Ehrlo (Pilot Butte)

- Regional Intersectoral Committee
- Regina Police Service
- Chamber of Commerce
- Regina Treaty Status/Indian Services
- Regina Métis Sport and Culture Inc.
- Farm Stress Line
- Family Service Saskatchewan
- Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board
- Community NetWORKS
- Saskatchewan Association for Community Living
- Saskatchewan Association for Multicultural Education
- Individuals

March 22, 2000
Moose Jaw

- Moose Jaw Public School Division No. 1;
  Moose Jaw Catholic School Division No. 22
  Christ the King School Division No. 83
  Thunder Creek School Division No. 78—
  The Task Force met with the following groups in each Division:
  - Directors
  - Division Office Administrators
  - In-School Administrators
  - Students
  - Teachers
  - Parents
  - School Board Members
- John Chisholm Alternate School
- Vanier Collegiate
- Alternate Learning Program
- Inter-Agency Group

April 11, 2000
Arcola

- Souris Moose Mountain School Division No. 122
  - Director of Education
  - Division Office Administrators
  - In-School Administrators
  - Students
  - Teachers
  - Parents
  - School Board Members
  - Inter-Agency and Shared Services Consultants

Estevan

- Estevan Public School Division No. 95;
  Estevan Catholic School Division No. 27;
  Estevan Comprehensive High School—
  The Task Force met with the following groups in each Division:
  - Directors of Education
  - Division Office Administrators
  - In-School Administrators
  - Students
  - Teachers
  - Parents
  - School Board Members
  - Inter-Agency Consultants

St. Isadore de Bellevue

- Conseils Scolaire Fransaskois
  - Directors of Education
  - Division Office Administrators
  - In-School Administrators
  - Students
  - Teachers
  - Parents
  - School Board Members

May 17, 2000

North Battleford

- Battlefords School Division No. 118
- North West School Division No. 16
- North West Regional College
- Saskatchewan Association of School Councils
- Early Years Project
- University of Saskatchewan, College of Education
- Outlook School Division No. 32

Melfort

- Melfort School Division No. 100
- Humboldt School Division No. 47
- Crystal Lakes School Division No. 120
- Kamsack School Division No. 35
- Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association
- NORTEP (Northern Teacher Education Program)

Weyburn

- Potashville School Division No. 80
- Moosomin School Division No. 9
- Estevan School Division No. 62

- Prairie View School Division No. 74
- Indian Head School Division No. 19
- University of Regina, Faculty of Education

May 18, 2000
Saskatoon

- Tour of Nutana Collegiate Institute
- Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board
- Integrated Services Consultant, Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina
- School Resource Officer, Saskatoon Police Service
- Saskatoon Communities for Children (Legal Aid Lawyer)

June 14, 2000
Saskatoon

- Deputy Ministers and Assistant Deputy Ministers:
  - Education
  - Social Services
  - Health
  - Justice
  - Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs
  - Postsecondary Education and Skills Training

APPENDIX 5

List of Submissions Received

Business

1. Ad Hoc Views of Yorkton Chamber of Commerce – Ms. Deb Schmidt

Community School Workers

2. A Collection of Letters from Students and Community Members – Wesmor Community High School
3. A Tool in the Development and Sustainability of Communities: Community School Principles – Mr. Jim Elliott
4. Community Development and Community Schools – Ms. Delphine Melchert
5. Looking to the Future of Saskatchewan's Children and Youth: Role of the School – Prince Albert Community Schools

Community Service Workers

6. Back to the Basics – April Dahnke
7. A Brief for Role of the School Task Force Provincial Cabinet – The Saskatchewan Association for Community Living
8. Building Healthy Communities Through Community Involvement – The Women's and Children's Health and the Population Health Teams of the East Central Health District
9. Changing Needs of Children, Youth and Community – Addictions Counsellor
10. Child and Youth Mental Health Services Within the Education System – Child and Youth Services, Swift Current
11. Children Not in School – Saskatoon Communities for Children, Inc.
12. Children with Diabetes and the Role of the School – Betty Deschamps
13. Early Identification of Behavioural or Academic Problems: Block Funding for Special Education Needs – Dr. Harriet Novak-Galgan
14. Education in the North – Mr. Alan Bischoff
15. Education-Involved Indicators of Child Prostitution – Cst. J. Schriemer
16. Experiences and Thoughts Towards Education and the Future of our Youth – Mr. Chris Ross
17. Family Service Agencies' Roles in Education – Family Service Saskatchewan
18. Indoor Air Quality – Mr. James Lechman
19. Larger Issues – Mr. Tom Seeley
20. Observations and Suggestions: Input to Dr. Barbara Young – Student Support Services staff
21. Presentation by the Saskatchewan Children's Advocate Office to the Task Force and Public Dialogue on the "Role of Schools" – The Saskatchewan Children's Advocate Office
22. Presentation Notes for Role of School Task Force – Saskatchewan School Trustees Association

23. Presentation to the Role of the School Committee – Farm Stress Line
24. Promoting and Supporting Early Learning – The Regina Early Learning Centre
25. A Proposal for Enhanced Therapy Service in the School System – Ms. Lesley Stamatinos, Ms. Diane Giesbrecht, and Ms. Moira Metrunec
26. Proposal on School Fees and School Expenses for Submission to "Communities for Children" – Political Action Group on Poverty and the Economic Equity Pod
27. Recommendations on "Role of the School" – Yorkton Child Action Committee
28. Reestablishing the School as a Community Centre – Mr. Don Watson
29. Role of the School Discussion – Swift Current Regional Intersectoral Committee
30. The Role of School Social Workers – Ms. H. Blackwell, Ms. I. Brooks, Ms. C. Christie-Beach, Ms. W. Shaw, and Ms. M. Tremblay
31. Some Thoughts about the Role of the School – Ms. Eileen Bone
32. Submission to the Role of the School Committee – Child & Youth Mental Health Services, East Central District
33. Task Force and Public Dialogue on the Role of the School – Saskatchewan Association for Multicultural Education Submission
34. A Vision for Saskatchewan Schools – Saskatchewan Literacy Network
35. Written Submission to the "Role of the School" Task Force – Ms. Elaine Carlson
36. Youth Contributions to Their Communities – United Way of Regina
37. Youth Issues – Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board
38. Youth Unemployment and Skills Shortages in Saskatchewan – Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board

Administrators

39. Independent Schools – The Schools of the Saskatchewan Historical High Schools Association
40. Key Issues Affecting SIAST – Mr. Rod Macpherson
41. Role of the School: Dialogue – Mr. W. David Thompson
42. Role of the School: Regina Public Schools – Ms. Audrey Roadhouse
43. Task Force and Public Dialogue on the Role of the School – Watrous Rural School Principals

Parents and Trustees

44. Flip Chart Exercise – SSTA Annual General Meeting
45. Funding Interventions and Initiatives – The Urban Public Boards Directors of Education and the Education Committee Catholic Section of the SSTA
46. Meeting of the Role of the School Committee with the Regina Public School Board – Ms. Verda Petry
47. Parent Forum: Group Discussion Notes – Regina Public Schools
48. Presentation to the Task Force and Public Dialogue on the "Role of Schools" – Ms. Carol Larwood
49. Special Needs Students – Anonymous Parent
50. Task Force of Education Presentation – Katherine Duke

Post Secondary Educators

51. Meeting and Supporting Diversity: Student Needs and Choices – Drs. C. Krentz and K. McNaughton
52. The Place of Schooling: A Journey in Humanization – Dr. D. Stewart
    Youth Unemployment and Skills Shortages - Dr. K. Quinlan

School Divisions

53. Presentation to the Role of the School — Parkland School Division No. 63

Students

54. Answers to the Questions Posed by the Task Force – Students
55. Reply to the Task Force's Questions – Watrous High School SRC
56. Suggestions of Students – Saskatoon School Division No. 13
57. Yorkton Youth Outreach Report – Yorkton Youth Outreach Program

Teachers

58. Barriers to Meeting Needs – Anonymous
59. Cooperation Between Social Services and Educators – Mr. Len Brhelle
60. Recommendations – Mr. Len Lorenz
61. Results of a Focus Group – Northern Teachers
62. Results of a Focus Group – Parkland Teachers' Association
63. The Role of the School – NetWORKS
64. Submission from a teacher in the Prince Albert Catholic School Division – Anonymous

Unions

65. Basic Learning – Cal Erickson, United Food and Commercial Workers' Union
66. Submission – Education Workers' Steering Committee, CUPE, Saskatchewan Regional Office

APPENDIX 6

List of Submissions for May Hearings

Post Secondary Institutions

1. Northern Teacher Education Program (NORTEP)
2. Northwest Regional College
3. University of Regina
4. University of Regina Student Services
5. University of Saskatchewan

Provincial Associations

6. Saskatchewan Association of School Councils (SASC)
7. Saskatchewan Urban Municipal Association (SUMA)

School Divisions/Boards/Schools

8. Battlefords S.D. #118
9. Battle River S.D. #60
10. Borderland S.D. #68
11. Buffalo Plains S.D. #21
12. Christ the King S.D. #83
13. Creighton S.D. #111
14. Crystal Lakes S.D. #120
15. Davidson S.D. #31
16. Estevan Rural S.D. #62
17. Griffin School
18. Humbolt S.D. #15
19. Humbolt Rural S.D. #47
20. Indian Head S.D. #19
21. Invermay Local School Board
22. Kamsack S.D. #35
23. Melfort S.D. #100
24. Moose Jaw S.D. #22
25. Moosomin Branch of STF
26. Moosomin S.D. #9
27. Northern Lights S.D. #113
28. Northwest Catholic S.D. #16
29. Outlook S.D. #32
30. Pense, Grand Coulee and Gray S.D.
31. Potashville S.D. #80
32. Prairie View S.D. #74
33. Prince Albert Grand Council, Band School Administrators
34. Red Coat Trail S.D. #69

35. Regina East S.D. #77
36. Saskatchewan Valley S.D. #49
37. Saskatoon (West) S.D. #42
38. Swift Current Trustees
39. Westcliffe Parent Advisory Committee
40. Weyburn Central S.D. #73
41. Weyburn S.D. #97

Special Projects

42. Youth Outreach Worker

APPENDIX 7

Major Literature Review Topics

Over 100 references were reviewed by a Task Force researcher under the following major topics:

- Aboriginal Education and the Role of Schools
- Community Development and the Role of Schools
- Early Years and Brain Research
- School-to-Work Transition
- Technology and Schools
- The Role(s) of Schools in the Integrated Services Movement

Foundational Documents Studied

- *Building Communities of Hope: Best Practices for Meeting the Learning Needs of At-Risk and Indian and Métis Students—Community Schools Policy and Conceptual Framework*, Saskatchewan Education, March 1996
- *Childhood . . . Entitled to Special Care*, Saskatchewan Children's Advocate Annual Report, 1998
- *Children and Youth in Care Review: Listening to Their Voices*, Saskatchewan Children's Advocate, March 1999
- *Directions for Diversity: Enhancing Supports to Children and Youth with Diverse Needs*, Final Report of the Saskatchewan Special Education Review Committee, January 2000
- *Directions: The Final Report*, Saskatchewan Education, February 1984
- *Education Indicators in Canada*, Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, 1999
- *Gathering 2000*, Saskatchewan Professional Development Unit, January 2000
- *Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child*, UNICEF, no date
- *Initiating an Integrated School-Linked Services Model*, Michael LeClaire, August 1999
- *Integrated School-Linked Services for Children and Youth At Risk: Implementation Guide*, Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment, December 1994

- *Integrated School-Linked Services: A Collaborative Team Report*, Nutana Collegiate, January 2000
- *Involving Parents and Community in Schools. Report and Future Plans*, Saskatchewan Education, May 1999
- *Measuring Success: The 1998-99 Education Indicators Report*, Saskatchewan Public School Division, December 1999
- *Our Children, Our Future: Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Children—Four Years Later*, Government of Saskatchewan, 1998
- *Parent and Community Partnerships in Education: Policy Framework*, May 1999
- *Practical and Applied Arts: An Information Bulletin*, Saskatchewan Education, January 2000
- *Regina's Hidden Youth: Final Report*, SIDRU, July 1999
- *Saskatchewan Education Indicators*, Saskatchewan Education, 1998
- *Saskatchewan Human Services: Integrated Case Management*, Government of Saskatchewan, October 1998
- *Saskatchewan Human Services: Interagency Projects—An Evaluation Guide*, Government of Saskatchewan, March 1997
- *Saskatchewan Human Services: Sharing Information to Improve Services for Children, Youth and Families—A Guide to the Legislation*, Government of Saskatchewan, May 1997
- *Saskatchewan Human Services: Working Together*, Government of Saskatchewan, October 1996
- *Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Children: 1999-2000 Initiatives*, Government of Saskatchewan
- *Second Report of Saskatchewan Council on Children: Recommendations to the Ministers participating in Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Children*, October 1998
- *Structuring Public Education for the New Century: Ensuring Quality Education for Saskatchewan Students—A Guide*, Saskatchewan Education, June 1997
- *The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act*, Government of Saskatchewan, 1999

- *The Role of Schools*, SSTA, January 1992
- *Why Not Our Kids, Too?*, Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board, August 1998
- *Working Together to Address Barriers to Learning: Integrated School-Linked Services for Children and Youth At Risk*, Government of Saskatchewan, September 1994
- *Wraparound: Absentee Assessment Team Process*, Const. Joceline Schriemer, Saskatchewan Police Service, 2000

APPENDIX 8

Terms of Reference
March 9, 1999

Purpose

The purpose of this initiative is to engage the education community, human service sectors, government, families and communities in meaningful and informed dialogue on the role of schools. It will include literature and jurisdictional reviews as well as facilitation of public dialogue to identify issues and options and make recommendations, including how supports can be put in place to assist schools in achieving their role. Recommendations will be directed to the provincial government, education partners and other stakeholders that have a role to play in supporting the education, development and well-being of children and youth in schools.

Membership

The public dialogue will be conducted by a Committee consisting of five to nine persons, appointed by the Minister of Education. These people will be chosen from a broad cross-section of the education community (including parents), as well as the human service and other sectors.

Objectives

The objectives of the Committee are to:

1. Facilitate informed dialogue within the education community and among other human service sectors, family members and the public;

2. Raise awareness and gain support among stakeholders and the public regarding the challenges and responsibilities schools embrace, including the extent to which the personal and social circumstances of children and youth impact on the quality of their education;

3. Identify the extent to which there is a gap between expectations of schools and their capacity to respond along with family, community and other agencies, in support of the healthy development and education of children;

4. Identify options and approaches for the role of schools in light of the needs of children and families, society's expectations and current resources;

5. Seek shared understanding of the role of schools, how this role can be supported, who should be involved, and report on areas of agreement and disagreement; and,

6. Provide direction and facilitate shared responsibility among a broad range of stakeholders for the implementation of the recommendations.

Delimitations

While the focus of this public dialogue is the changing role of schools in light of the changing personal and social circumstances of children, the dialogue may surface other issues. The Government of Saskatchewan, however, remains committed to the following three understandings that will not be within the parameters of this dialogue:

- the value and benefit of Core Curriculum;
- the responsibility for education shared between the provincial government and local autonomous boards of education; and,
- the constitutional protection afforded linguistic and minority faith populations.

Process and Timelines

The Committee will use a range of innovative and inclusive methods and structures to engage the education community, other human service sectors, parents and the public in dialogue as set out in the parameters. In addition, the Committee will engage senior government and other partners in dialogue to build shared understanding of and support for the role of schools. A parallel activity will include literature and jurisdictional reviews to identify options.

The overall initiative will involve two phases, beginning in March 1999 and ending December 31, 2000:

- The Committee will be established in March 1999 and will begin the public dialogue in September 1999, providing an interim report by June 2000.
- Based on the interim report, the Committee will continue with a second phase of the dialogue, the parameters of which will be determined based on the progress and findings of the first phase, with a final report by December 31, 2000.

Secretariat

The Committee will be supported by a secretariat, including a researcher/coordinator and clerical support.

APPENDIX 9

Glossary

academic streaming: a course selection system whereby students are steered into high school courses which will qualify them for university entrance, as opposed to vocational/technical streaming, which would direct students into other kinds of postsecondary study, or immediate employment

alternate programs/schools: programs or schools which do not follow the structure and schedule of mainstream schools but rather adapt these to the individual student with unusual circumstances, while still providing a path to a high school diploma

at risk: a term that describes students who, for various reasons such as behavioral, economic, cultural, physical and mental, are in danger of being unable to complete a K-12 education

character education: a part of the school curriculum which encourages students to acquire personal and social values and skills (see the Saskatchewan Education Curriculum, Common Essential Learnings)

Community School Program: a Saskatchewan Education initiative designed for elementary schools in communities with a given number of "at-risk children" (see definition above). The program provides funding to these schools to facilitate the involvement of community services, as well as parents, in fulfilling all the needs of the students

Correspondence School: a section of Saskatchewan Education that provides print instruction, tutoring assistance, and assessment, by correspondence, leading to a high school diploma

coterminous: refers to a case where boundaries of regions of government departments are duplicated geographically, e.g., a Health District would exist in the same geographical space as a School Division or a Social Services Region

cumulative folder/"cum" folder: the record of a student, accumulated over the period of time during which he/she is enrolled in the school system and normally passed from teacher to teacher, school to school as the student progresses

distance education: the off-site delivery of course content through correspondence or electronic means

early intervention: in the terms of this *Report*, early intervention refers to action taken in the early years of a child's life, from birth to school entry, which addresses barriers to learning created by disadvantageous conditions and circumstances

envelopes; microfunding: short-term and minimal amounts of funding given by various agencies to schools to satisfy immediate needs for programs – this funding disappears within a prescribed timeframe

FAS; FAE: fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effect, both appearing in children whose mothers have maintained unsafe levels of alcohol consumption during pregnancy

full-service school: a school which provides all services that might be required by any given student (as in a community school – see definition above). These might include health, child welfare, counseling, and occupational therapy services, and many others

hidden youth: children and youth who are under 18, have no fixed address, do not attend school, and live on the street in marginal situations related to inadequate shelter, food, clothing and health care

high-speed connectivity: capability of fast connection to internet providers regardless of location in the province

HSIF: Human Services Integration Forum, a government body of cooperating departments that share information on the needs of children and youth within their areas of responsibility and make remedial funding decisions – these departments include Education; Social Services; Health; Postsecondary Education and Skills Training; Municipal Affairs, Culture and Housing; and, Justice

human service agencies: all government departments listed under HSIF above, as well as all nongovernment organizations involved in the delivery of human services

IB: International Baccalaureate – a strong academic program offered in a few selected high schools which prescribes the study of a set of courses, along with internationally set standards

integrated services/case management: a term related to full-service schools, through which all needs of a particular student are met in a manner which involves the service providers' working together to achieve the common goal of assistance for the whole child

interagency: a term describing cooperation and collaboration between and among agencies in meeting the needs of children and youth in more than one service area

ISLS: Integrated School-Linked Services, an interagency program which provides, through the school system, the various services children and youth might need

New School; School^{PLUS}: terms suggested in this *Report* to describe the full-service school of the future

North (the); Northern: capitalization of these words denotes the North as an area of Saskatchewan, and Canada also, where the population is predominantly Aboriginal, and that are or have been served by provincial and federal government departments called "Northern Affairs"

physical plant: refers to school buildings and all the accompanying physical aspects of the structures where education takes place, e.g., classrooms, gymnasiums, auditoriums, computer rooms, playgrounds and playground equipment, etc.

preservice teacher: a student registered in a provincial postsecondary teacher education institution where he/she is studying to become a teacher (also called "student teacher")

pupil-teacher ratio: the number of students per teacher in a classroom

recovery program: in this *Report*, the term refers to a program for students who have not completed Grade 12 and who have exceeded the age of 18, at which age they may not return to the K-12 school system to receive a high school diploma. A recovery program would allow over-age students to return to school for this purpose

RIC: Regional Intersectoral Committees are the "on-the-ground" working groups of the Human Services Integration Forum (see definition above), with membership comprising all local agencies having responsibility for one aspect or other of the well being of children and youth in school

role-alike groups: groups comprising people of like purpose and activity, e.g., school division administrators (directors, superintendents, consultants), in-school administrators (principals, vice-principals), school board members (also called "trustees"), teachers, students, parents, community services workers, and business, industry and labour workers

Senior Government: includes the Premier, Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Associate/Assistant Deputy Ministers of government departments , and Executive Directors of department branches

Shared Services: a Saskatchewan Education initiative through which several schools within a given geographical area share resources and services necessary to education in order to cut costs

single-jurisdiction model: for the purpose of this *Report*, a model where a school division would be served by one service agency, even when more than one agency provides services within the division's boundaries

stovepipe delivery: the delivery of human services exclusively through single government departments without coordination with related services of other departments

student-centred: the approach in the Saskatchewan Education curriculum which makes the development and education of the whole child the primary focus of the education system

student diversity: concerns the variations and differences, among students in any given classroom, school, division or system, in cultural heritages and identities, gender and class experiences, and mental and physical abilities

top-down; bottom-up: expressions conveying the idea that the top levels of government must provide the power and the funding to the people actually doing the work at the community level to take action to assist students in school

tracking: a system to identify and monitor progress of students among schools, divisions and systems (e.g., provincial and Band-controlled)

trustee: a municipally-elected member of a school division board

wrap around: a model for case management for at-risk children with significant client involvement in service provision and decision making